

MAN IMMORTAL
BY
WM. STITT TAYLOR



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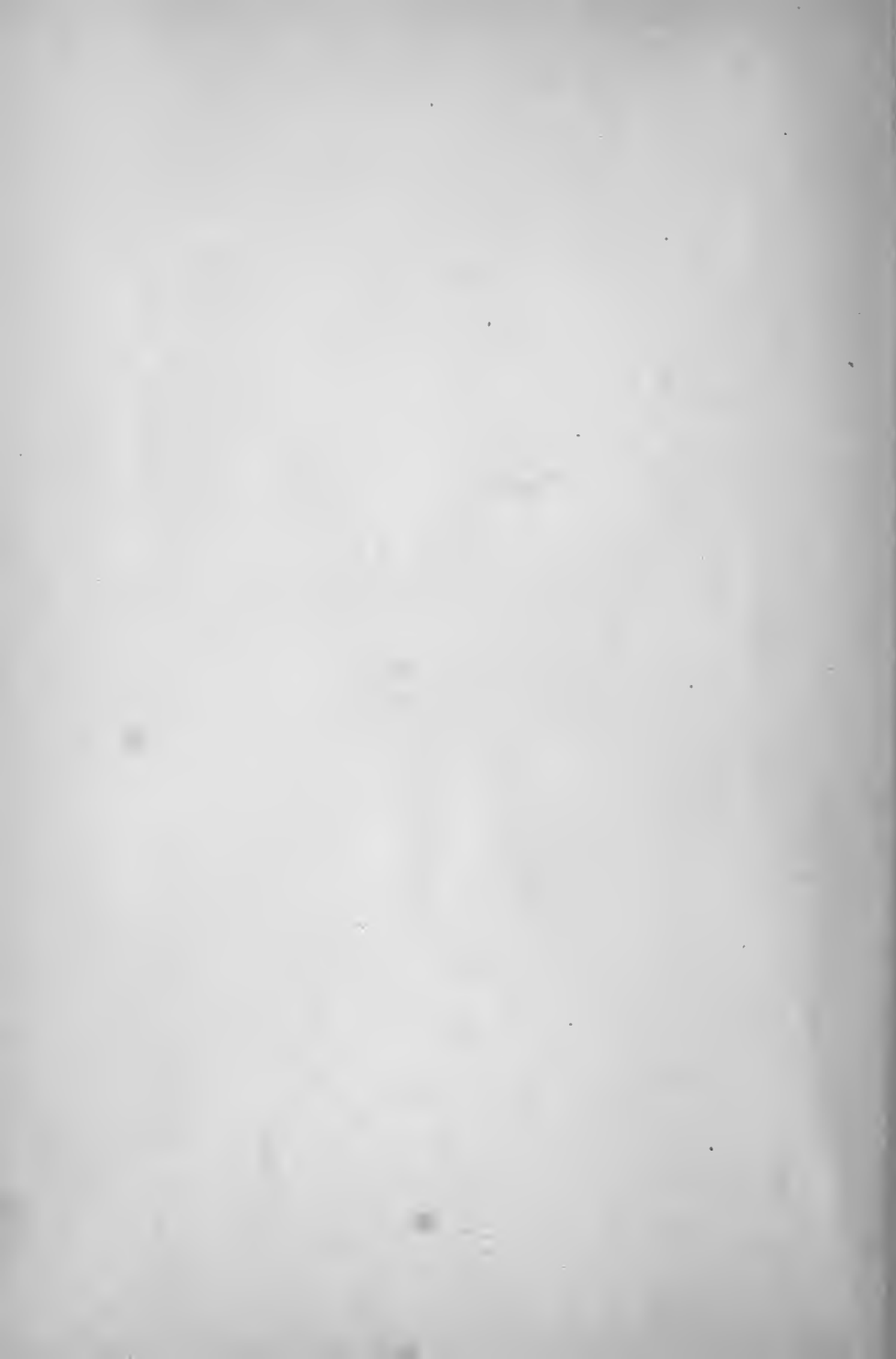
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Truly yours
W. E. Taylor.

MAN IMMORTAL.

AN

ALLEGORICAL POEM.

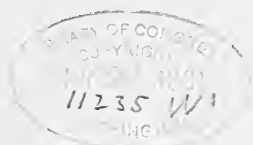
BY

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לֹא נָמוּת

"We shall not die."—*Habakkuk*, i. 12.



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To the sainted loved ones
Of hallowed memory,
Who have already reached
The "hills of light,"
And to all those
Now contending
In this mortal fight,
Who are comforted and sustained,
Amid the shadows
Of life's battle-night,
By the grandest of hopes
Which God e'er gave,—
That of a blessed immortality
Beyond the grave,—

This work is affectionately dedicated,

BY THE AUTHOR.



לא נָמוּת

"Lo-namouth!"

"We shall not die!"

Grand announcement

From the sky.

In the sacred

Hebrew tongue,

Hope for all

The years to come.

Sublimely down

The centuries sweeping,

In Almighty

Accents speaking.

Glory waiteth now

For clay!

Incorruption

On decay!

Eternity gildeth

Carnal gloom!

Earth is fruition's

Ante-room!

For, midst the wreck
Of mortal strife,
I plant the standard
Of eternal life.

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INTRODUCTION.

THERE is a time,
'Twixt eve and morn,
When the soul,
From Earth's care borne,
Mounteth up,
And seeming its house
Of flesh to flee,
Attests
Its Immortality.

'Twas 'midst the nightmare
Of a troubled sleep;
It seemed as though
Upon an angry deep,
On an ocean
Without shore,
A castaway
Despised, forsaken;

When, as though
By some good angel taken,
I drifted to the boundaries
Of the evermore.
There I had a vision,
It was ecstasy in elysian,
And a single moment of it o'er
More than repaid me
For all the troubles
I had ever known before.
But what tongue of dust
Can tell that story?
What eye of Earth
E'er beheld such matchless glory?
What finite mind
Could of such heights conceive?
Or mortal Man
The veriest of its truths believe?
Not a single word'
Had yet been spoken.
From out the glamour
Of that splendor broken;
But as I lay there,
Entranced in rapture,
Bathing in that golden tide,
Suddenly, from out the brightness,
A radiant form

Came to my side,
And in tones of wondrous clearness,
 With a cadence sweet and low,
Bent above and whispered to me,
 "Come, we're ready now to go."
Willingly I obeyed the summons;
 Anxious was I to be free;
Eager to reach that better country
 I had yearned so long to see.
So I quickly rose and followed,
 And, as we journeyed on,
A mount of nameless grandeur
Rose before us
That some glorious object
 Seemed to rest upon.
Surely, thought I,
This is Heaven;
Here's the land
 Which hath no night.
Farewell, Earth!
I've reached its fulness,
I'm out of darkness
 Into light.
But scarce had another step been taken
 Towards that nearing glory-land,
When lo! without a moment's warning,
 We met and joined a wondrous band,

Each, like myself, attended
By a glorious angel guide,
Who, seemingly afraid lest aught befall,
Kept constantly at their side.
One of these was old and feeble,
Weary-worn with care;
His limbs, they tottered as he walked,
And like a snow-drift
Was his hair.
One was a very giant,
And frightful to behold;
He strode along
Like a conqueror,
With a mien majestic and bold.
Another was grim and ghastly,
With a hollow, hideous leer,
And mould was clinging to his clothes,
Which savored of the bier.
Another still was black as midnight,
With a fearfully distorted face,
On which both gloom, remorse, despair,—
All seemed to have a place.
But one—the last of all the train—
Was beautiful as the dawn
And lovely as Eden's bowers:
Her hair was woven of sunlight,
And her vestments were garlands of flowers.

A rare perfume hung around her,
Which laden all of the air,
And, even with angel attendants,
She seemed the fairest being there.
Thus—a strangely-mixed procession—
We continued our onward way,
Until at last we reached the mount
Bathed in effulgent day,
Where, in waiting to receive us,
Stood a blest, immortal band,
With one who high above them sat enthroned,
Like a ruler in the land.
A dazzling lustre hid her face,
Shining forms about her flew;
A burning light flashed from her brow,
Which, far out into surrounding space,
Wondrous rays of beauty threw.
Heavenly incense filled the air,
Clouds of flame about her hung,
While anthems such as ear ne'er heard
Were by hosts seraphic sung.
Speechless with wonder,
On that gorgeous scene I gazed,
Though almost blinded by its brightness,
And by its grandeur dazed;
Yet feeling, as I looked the while,
Pleasures such as earth ne'er craved;

Joys unutterable in being there ;
Raptures infinite in feeling saved.
A moment only
Did the vision last.
I looked again,
And it had passed,—
Passed like a meteor
Athwart the sky,—
Passed like the lightning's
Flash on high,
Leaving naught save a shining one
To guard our band,
And she enthroned
Who ruled the land,
Who now, with voice
As of the spheres,
Which fell like Heaven
Upon mine ears,
Asked of the angel
Standing near,
“Who and whence came
These beings here?”
Thus addressed, the angel
Bowed her head,
Bent the knee,
And slowly said,
“Here is Time and Nature,

Death and Hell,
Victorious Grave,
And Man, who fell:
All come that they
Thy glories now may see;
Come to tell
What grounds there be
On which they found
Their claims to thee,
Immortality! to thee.
But, I have told them,
One and all,
Thou art not
Of the Earth at all.
None of her subjects
Bear thy royal seal.
That realm of bliss
Which alone is thine
Lies beyond this 'vale of tears,'
Beyond the boundaries of Time.
Ah, yes! thou art
Of a fairer clime,
Of infinitely greater worth
And nobler lineage
Than aught of Earth.
This vapor-like existence,
This fleeting breath,

This cumbersome mortality
Which dissolves in Death;
This charnel-house of Nature,
Where virtue fell,
This fallen planet
Which peoples Hell,
Are all unknown to thee.
Thy home is in the 'many mansions,'
Beside the 'jasper sea,'
'And thy name is
God's own eternity."

A pause which seemed
With destiny endued,
And then, methought,
In tones subdued,
This wondrous
Colloquy ensued.

I.

Immortality's Greeting.

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IMMORTALITY'S GREETING.

CREATURES of alien
Climes afar,
Ye who here
As suppliants are,
Dire creations
For blighted strands,
Fallen beings
From sin-cursed lands,
Mortal striplings,
Finite things,
Who fain would drink
Of immortal springs,
Slake thy thirst
At founts on high;
Quaff of me
And never die.
Though surely
'Tis a thing untold,
For light a conference
With its shades to hold;
Still, that listening Earth

The truth may know
Concerning the part
Each plays below
In God's stupendous,
Wondrous plan,
Which compasseth the eternal
Life of Man,—
For this once
I bend mine ear,
And will in patience
Thy petitions hear,
Although in truth
I greatly fear
There is very little
That's not mortal here;
While perchance, of thee all
Regenerate, a single one,
Who, through much tribulation,
May to glory come.
But of this anon.
Now may each in brief relate
The claims possessed
To my estate,
And as, in turn,
These pleas are told,
Then to each an answer
I'll unfold.

II.

Appeal of Nature.



APPEAL OF NATURE.

O THOU being,
 Blest of light!
Custodian grand
 Of regions bright
Bordering on
 The crystal sea,
Rising, boundless,
 To eternity,
E'en the realms
 Of bliss above,
For aye illumed
 With Godhead's love;
Dazzling heights
 Of mounts divine,
Towering o'er
 The vales of Time;
Celestial regions,
 Glory's land
Of deathless shore
 And graveless strand;

Populous
 With angelic throngs,
Resonant
 With seraphic songs,
Where the tree
 Of healing grows,
Where life's river
 Ever flows
By the throne
 Of monarchs' King,
To which all worlds
 Their homage bring;
Clad in robes
 Of matchless state,
In audience here
 At Heaven's gate;
Vision fair
 Of endless day,
Glorious insignia
 Of Almighty sway,
Sublime impersonation
 Of eternal truth,
Majestic exponent
 Of unaging youth,
Priestess holy
 At beings' shrine,
Empress regent

Of its natal clime.
'Tis Nature; I,
Who first to thee,—
The representative
Of sovereignty,—
In regal obeisance
Bends the knee,
As becometh a vassal
Of Divinity;
For though thy home
Is with the King,
From whence dominion
All doth spring;
And while thy sway
For evermore
Doth sweep the Heaven
Of heavens o'er;
Still, not even this
Doth all include,—
God's empire
Is infinitude,—
And e'en such compass
Scarce defines
The bounds in which
His glory shines;
For, outreaching far
Angelic flight,

Exists the structures
Of His might.
Beyond all space
His word hath formed,
His presence blessed,
And love adorned;
To all immensity
His work extends;
There is no point
At which it ends.
And o'er these regions
Vast, sublime,—
Creations all
Of hands divine,—
From where the farthestmost
World had birth
E'en down to this
That's called "the Earth;"
O'er this wide range,
Arrayed in light,—
A veritable wilderness
Of systems bright,—
With thickets dense
Of orbs serene,
Which flash afar
In gold and green;
From out a labyrinth

Of blinding suns,
Which line the course
The comet runs,
And with burning luminaries
Swarm, like bees,
About the boughs
Of blazing trees,
Where flaming planets
Crowd the ground,
'Midst fiery sentinels
Clustered round
In starry galaxies
Which, like the sand,
With constellations
Strew the strand,
And fringe with glory
O'er and o'er
The uttermost bounds
Of beings' shore,
As on and on
In glistening spheres,
Up and up
In glittering tiers,
They stretch and widen
Into space,
Mirroring forth
Their Maker's face

In Hercules'
And Orion's sway,
Aquila's splendor
And the Bear's display,
The Pleiades
And Milky-Way,
Zodiacal wonders
And Aurora's day,
Stellar dust
And mistings gray
From the glowing
Worlds away,—
Every luminous speck
A star,
Blistering centres
At points afar,
With numberless satellites
Thronged around,
Which roll and soar
In depths profound;
Magnitude
On magnitude,
Each in its own
Beatitude,
Ever, ever
Towering high,
Story by story,

Through the sky,
Until about the throne
They stand,
The outposts
Of a subject land,
And o'er every realm—
In this domain—
Of which thine own's
The suzerain—
I rule by grace.
In adoration
Behold me, Heaven :
I am Creation.
Of a lineage
Like to thine,
In the self-same
Royal line,
Crowned and sceptred
Just like thee,
Sister queens
Of Deity,
Reigning o'er
Dominions wide,
Kingdom and province,
Side by side,
Only thou
At empire's seat ;

I the footstool
For its feet,
Thou the elder,
Hence, of right,
Thine the throne
Supreme in light.
But though I serve
While thou dost reign,
Still, our kinship
Doth remain.
Thou mayst disown,
But ne'er deny
That I'm a princess
From the sky;
For, God-created,
Here I stand
A member of
His family band,
His very child,
The same as thee
In common heirship
To eternity;
And with this birthright
Fixed on high,
'Tis a thing impossible
For me to die.
I therefore claim,

As here I bend,
That, e'en as thou,
I have no end.
But come, behold
My glorious sway,
E'en 'neath the sun
Of earthly day.
Gaze upon
My living age,
Open wide
Its pictured page,
And through and through
These marvels grand
Canst thou not see
The Father's hand?
And is there aught
Which He hath made
That is not
Of eternal grade?
Is yon orb's mission
But to shine
A little while
And then decline?
Are moon and stars
But fixed about
To gild the night
And then go out?

Or e'en this universe,—
The least of spheres
With which it runs
The round of years,
And yet a mighty,
Majestic whole,
With glory crowned
From pole to pole,—
Is it a bubble
Vast and fair,
But destined
To dissolve in air?
Why, God in person
Staked the ground
On which these wonders
All are found.
His own blest fingers
Wove their skies,
And decked them
With celestial dyes.
His Omnipotent self
Their fabrics framed,
Invested, beautified,
And named;
And then, as if
To closer bind,
To all these charms

He added mind;
For even here
Upon this earth
He gave His very
Essence birth,
Clothed it
In a form sublime,
Patterned after
The Divine,
Placed it
At dominion's helm,
Made it Lord
Of all the realm;
And what an earldom!
Come and see
This gorgeous
Heavenly dependency:
See it on its
Borders grand,
See its oceans
Girt with sand,
See its islands,
See its strand,
See its heavens
And see its land;
See it in its
Verdant powers,

See its shrubs
 And leafy towers,
See its grasses,
 See its bowers,
See its ferns
 And see its flowers ;
See it in its
 Realms of light,
See its rays'
 Inspiring might,
See it radiant,
 See it bright,
See its days
 And see its night ;
See it 'neath its
 Seasons' glow,
See its buds
 Begin to blow,
See its golden
 Harvests grow,
Then its mellowings
 And its snow ;
See it where its
 Fountains play,
See its waters'
 Varied sway—
Rivers, brooks,

And rills away—
From the rising
To the bay;
See it in its
Wide domains,
See its valleys,
Hills, and plains,
Cliffs and crags
And mountain-chains,
With the sublimity
Which o'er them reigns;
See it in its
Prospects fair
Of the sea, the main,
And air,
Beauty's sheen
And grandeur's glare
Round the life
Resplendent there;
See it in its
Boundless store,
E'er provided
On before;
Bounty's yield
And blessings pour
All its parts
And sections o'er;

See it in its
 Harmonies,
Fellowships,
 And symphonies,
Glorious, grand
 Affinities
Grouped in blest
 Communities;
See it in its
 Altitudes,
Fathomless depths,
 And latitudes,
Circling zones
 And longitudes,
See the globe
 Which all includes;
See it in its
 Might secure,
See it then
 In miniature,—
Sunbeams, sands,
 And rain-drops pure,—
See the worlds
 Which these immure;
See it in its
 Little things,—
Blades and blossoms,

Motes and springs,—
 See the majesty
 Its frailty brings
 'Neath the fold
 Of mystery's wings;
 See its
 Animalcule
 Of infinitesimal
 Quantity,
 Living atoms,
 Bright and free,
 And each endowed
 With destiny;
 See it exultant,
 See it all,—
 In grand divisions
 And globules small,—
 Insect's cell
 And manorial hall,
 Obscure particle
 And sovereign ball;
 And, seeing, tell me,
 Can it be
 That naught of this
 Belongs to thee?
 Why, every mite
 Within this girth

Is the offspring wondrous
Of Omniscient birth.
The veriest atomy
Here contained
The Infinite's handiwork
By Heaven sustained;
While of existence
Herein rife,
Whom other than Deity
Imparteth life?
And who else, then,
I fain would know,
Could have fashioned Earth
Or adorned it so?
And wouldst thou say
That climes like these,
In which the very
Godhead breathes,
Are not as absolute
As their King,
And deathless
'Neath His sheltering wing?
But hark! list to the song,
Hear the strain from abroad;
'Tis Creation's praises
To its Creator,—God;
'Tis the homage of the creature

Rising up to the sky,—
A vast realm adoring
Its Maker on high;
Exhibiting the wisdom
Which His goodness doth bless,
Publishing the greatness
He alone doth possess;
Proclaiming the majesty
Which surroundeth His throne,
While declaring the glory
Of our Lord alone.
And surely in these
My kingdom endures;
For if they are His,
Are they not likewise yours?
And doth not these jewels
Effulgent in me
Shine on through the future
Coexistent with thee?



III.

Immortality to Nature.



IMMORTALITY TO NATURE.

ALAS! no, fair Creation,
I am not found in thee,
For in all of thy glories
Thou'rt a stranger to me.
Things eternal and finite
Can never align,
So I am not yours,
Neither canst thou be mine.
All thy forms and thy beauties
Exist but a day,
And are rapidly,
Rapidly passing away;
For though truly by Heaven
Conceived and designed,—
A marvel of prowess
And wisdom combined,—
And though erstwhile thus fashioned
By the Father above,
And resplendently dressed
In the garb of His love;

Though crowned with perfection
And sceptred with grace,
And e'en at the throne's step
Allotted a place
'Midst the regal and princely
Of Deity's court,
With the kingly and priestly
Of the Lord to consort;
Though attuned to the pæans
Of Divinity's praise,
Throughout all futurity
Its anthems to raise,
And though endowed with existence
As wondrous as God,
And called to an empire
In its fulness as broad;
Still, these glows were of morning,
Thy day since hath fled,
And meridian splendors
At evening are dead.
All this was of spring-time,
But e'en thy summer's now flown,
And wintry winds howl
Where the autumn hath blown.
Such alone thy blest advent,
In its unequalled prime,
While, worn now and wasted,

Thou art stranded in Time;
For sin hath crept into
Thy domain, once so bright,
And the curse doth envelop
Thy realm in its night.
Broadcast o'er thy kingdom
The tare hath been sown,
And the harvest now claims
Of the seeding its own;
Hence thy scenes of enchantment
Are but chimeras of air
In which vapors seem lasting
And the dying look fair;
For thou hast nothing enduring,
No power that can save;
But one end awaiting,
And that is—the Grave,
Whose gaunt fortress, Oblivion,
E'en this hour doth contain
The very props of thy throne,
With the crown of thy reign.
And what hardihood, then,
To suppose or maintain
That, with these in the dust,
Thy realm could remain!
Ah, the cloud which o'erhangs thee
Is of darkness profound,

And its blackness is felt
To thine uttermost bound;
The flame which consumes thee
Reduceth each part,
And naught can escape it,
For it burns from the heart;
While the wave that o'erwhelms thee
At no point may pause,
Since it rolls universal
In effect to the cause,
And that cause transgression,
A disease of the soul
Undermining the pillars
Which supporteth the whole;
And thus the disturbance
Giving birth to the blast
Which already hath levelled
And will destroy thee at last.
What then seems to linger,
Alike of beauty or grace,—
In the draping of form
Or expression of face,—
Comes alone of the loveliness
Fleeing outward before
The march of destruction
Which reigns at the core,
And e'en these but an instant

In succession evade
The all-withering grasp
Of the pursuing shade;
For blight follows guilt
Close as brightness the sun,
Seeing one is the source
Whence the other doth run;
And hence broad as the borders
O'er which thou hast sway
Are these regions of change
And this realm of decay,
In the which all existent,
Both of matter and breath,
Animate or inanimate,
Are the subjects of Death;
For this is the legacy
Bequeathed by the fall,
And through an acknowledged Head
Made the portion of all.
A beauteous culprit,
Thou art therefore condemned
And only awaiting,
'Mid shadows, the end;
And this quickly cometh,—
Lo! to-day is at hand,—
For rent are thine heavens
And distracted thy land;

All thy realm is discordant
 With contention and strife,
For opposed are thy forces
 And at variance thy life.
Thine every state hath some burden,
 Each condition its woes,
Every form its antagonist,
 And each object its foes.
Moth corrupteth thy treasures,
 Rust corrodes and alloys,
The murrain infects
 And the weevil destroys.
Mould defileth thy freshness
 With the musting that sours ;
The mistings efface,
 And the canker devours.
Frailty's stamped on thy strong ones,
 To thy fair cometh stain,
Thy buds burst in tears,
 And thy births are of pain.
Briers cling to thy blossoms,
 Thistles hedge thy perfume,
Thorns are bound to thy fruitage,
 Nettles sting 'midst thy bloom.
Serpents lurk at thy fountains,
 Vultures nest in thy trees,
Monsters roam o'er thy land-realms

And inhabit thy seas.
Fires burn in thy mountains,
Famines breed on thy plains,
Pestilence stalks in thy sunlight,
Floods descend in thy rains.
Snows deaden thy landscapes,
Tempests shatter thy bowers,
Drought withers thy verdure,
And frost kills thy flowers.
Night closes thy days,
Clouds follow thy morns,
And thou ne'er hast a calm
But 'tis succeeded by storms.
Thy skies are ever lurid,
All thy hopes are sin-shorn,
Thy sweets have grown acrid,
And thy beauties forlorn.
Thy very throne is subverted,
And palsied thy powers,
Broken down are thy bulwarks
And dismantled thy towers.
E'en thine house is divided
And bowed to its fall,
For doom is the banner
Which floateth o'er all;
And however colossal
The structure may seem,

At this call of destiny
 'Twill dissolve, as a dream,
And go back to the elements
 Which erst gave it birth,
Leaving nothing but vacancy
 Where now is the Earth ;
Likewise, also, the fabric
 Which beareth thy name,
With aught that hath parcel
 Or lot in the shame,—
All, all, e'en as mist,
 Will be swept from the sky,
And, into original nothingness
 Returning, shall die ;
While on through the cycles
 That never were born,
I ever shall shine
 In the splendors of morn,
'Mid scenes uncreated,
 Which waste not nor pine,
In the realms wide, immortal,
 Of the kingdom divine ;
But where pavilioned with Godhead,
 In life's vestal spheres,
The day's beginning I know not,
 Neither ending of years.
And e'en if this essence

In thy confines should be,
Dissolution awaits it,
In connection with thee.
Albeit a marvellous quality
God conferred with His breath,
And though in Time 'tis extinguished,
Still it liveth in Death ;
But when thus transported
From the climes where it fell,
Everlasting effacement
Confronts it with Hell.
Then think not, O Nature !
That this realm of thine
In the veriest particular
Is essential to mine ;
Nor yet that this absolute
Ending of thee
Will detract an iota
From the glories in me ;
For less e'en than a grass-blade
On the verdure-clad sod
Is thy kingdom, polluted,
In the empire of God ;
And when it hath vanished
From this forest profound,
The fall alone will be that
Of a leaf to the ground.

And still, in thy blindness,
Thou didst claim all the zone
Where the sovereign Almighty
In His majesty's known,—
All this star-spangled fringing
Of immensity's strand,
With the world-studded areas
Of infinitude's land,—
And didst not consider
That these are on high,
Whilst thy place and position
Is the floor of the sky,—
An outlying barren
On eternity's page,
By the councils Omniscient
Devised for the stage
Where, in matchless unfoldings
Of a God-conceived plan,
Should be solved and enacted
The problem of Man;
And with this effected,—
As since it hath been,—
Both arena and actors
Depart from the scene;
While of these orbs surrounding,
In their unchallenged might
Blazing onward and upward

Through the regions of light,
'Tis not for the terrestrial
That more should be told,
Save that these are the mansions,
Celestial, of gold,
Whose import and purpose
God Himself will reveal
When the archangel's trumpet
Hath broken the seal.
Hence all thy dominion
Is of circumscribed girth,
And confined to the system,
Accursèd, of Earth;
And 'tis thus, O Creation!
That 'twixt thee and me
Not one single vestige
Of kinship can be;
For while I live forever,
Thy life's but a day;
While I am eternal,
Thou art but clay.



IV.

Claim of Time.



CLAIM OF TIME.

BUT, if not found in Nature,
Sure it is I possess
A royalty bearing
Thy signet's impress;
For o'er all the realms
Of the finite that fell,
To thy borders blest,—
E'en the confines of Hell,—
With a majesty boundless,
Enduring, sublime,
I reign God's vicegerent,
With the title of Time;
The monarch Duration,
Creator of years,
Upholding the stars
And directing the spheres;
Enthroned o'er existence,
Sceptred with change,
The sovereign lord
Of the centuries' range;
Bestowing the seasons,
Guiding their flight,

Controlling the conditions
Of darkness and night;
Bringing the dawn
Of life's morning and day,
And hastening the eve
Of its passing away.
Evolving the eras
Whence the epochs doth wend,
And hurrying creation
To its appointed end;
In the tireless roll
Of mutations vast,
With noiseless steps
From ages past,
To my chariot wheels
With fetters fast,
E'en to the bounds
These region's last.
Here, about my throne deep strewn,
The skeletons of nations lie,
The wreckage grand of countless years
In dire confusion pilèd high;
Empires 'neath my feet have sprung,
Before my sway to fall,
And hoary kingdoms too.
Fabrics colossal and objects small,
With life universal

On this terrestrial ball,
Hearkening alike
To my relentless call,
Do share the fate
I hold for all.
Ah, yes! the heights supreme
Of might and power,
The magnificence and grandeur
Of glory's hour,—
All the pomp and pride
Of this fitful clime,
The wreck and ruin of ages,
Have all been mine.
Mine e'en was the void
In its chaotic sleep,
And I heard the first murmurs
Which came from the deep;
Saw the universe rise
From its watery bed,
And felt the first throbbings
Of life from the dead;
Beheld the "ruler of day,"
In his majestic birth,
And I gazed on the first
Of the "sunsets" of Earth;
Stood by the Almighty Architect
And Builder Divine,

As He fashioned all nature
In beauties sublime ;
Saw Him stretch out the heavens
And color the sky,
Then kindle the fires
Of the glories on high ;
Watched Him mark out the bounds
For the oceans so vast,
And rear up the mountains
As though forever to last ;
Marked Him give to the Earth
Its regal robes green,
And beheld a glorious world formed
Where the waters had been ;
Saw Him temper the winds
For the seasons to come,
Then map out the courses
For the planets to run ;
Observed Him give to the land,
The seas, and the air—
In innumerable forms—
The life that is there.
Then noted the grand consummation
Of creation's plan,
When forth in His likeness
Came immortal Man ;
Heard him say, then, "'Tis finished,

All my handiwork blest,
And I therefore make hallowed
This one day of rest;
Draw it out from the others
Like an altar to be,
Where all Nature may hold
Sweet communion with me."
Anon, then, in Paradise,
Saw the wreck of it all;
Beheld the transgression,
And witnessed the fall;
Heard the dire sentence
Thundered forth from on high,
"Man, thy sin makes thee mortal;
Thy race now must die."
Then saw the guilty ones fleeing
Before the uplifted rod,
Exiles from Eden
And outcasts from God;
Next witnessed the advent
Of the children of clay,
As likewise the coming
Of Death and decay;
Observed a foul generation
On the Earth multiply.
Of e'en creation repented
By the Maker on high;

Listened while this wicked people
All the hosts of Heaven defied,
Then in wrath's o'erwhelming waters
Came the issue to decide.
Rode with Noah o'er the floods,
Through the deluge storm and rain,
And gazed with him from Ararat.
On a world restored again;
Saw the "bow of promise" set
Athwart the clearing sky,
The "covenant's sign" that never more
Should Earth by water die.
Then on and on, in widening stream,
Beheld life's heedless flow,
Umindful of the lessons taught
By sires and their overthrow;
Watched the Babel-builders
Presumptuous, on Shinar's plain;
Anon—confused, dispersed—
Beheld their labor vain.
Sat with Abraham in his tent,
And listened to his sigh
For that better, even heavenly country,
With its God-built city on high.
Saw Joseph, the victim of envy,
A bondsman and prisoner, alone;
Next beheld him in royal apparel,

And sharing with Pharaoh the throne.
Stood by the Nile at a season
When a babe was hidden away,
Whom thereafter a nation saw leading
From a tyrant's oppression and sway;
Joined Israel's hegira from thralldom,—
Through years a nomadic band,—
By sea and waste and wilderness,
At last to Canan's land.
Was in all the wars of subjugation
'Neath the Judge's rule sublime;
Saw the triumph, then the founding
Of an earthly power divine;
Harkened to the clamor for a king,
And beheld the anointed choice;
Was at the temple's dedication,
And heard the wise man's voice.
Brought then the days of dire dissension,
Succeeding close his glorious reign,
Whence the tribes were rent asunder
And the kingdom cleft in twain;
Marked the road thus paved to conquest
Which the bold invader found,
And anon beheld his legions
Zion's bulwarks marshalled round.
Noted then her desolation,
Saw her day of sorrow dawn,

And beheld her children carried,
A host enslaved, to Babylon.
Was through all that grinding bondage,
Saw the harps on the willows hung,
And, in place of song, heard wailing
From the broken captives wrung.
Came again in the restoration
Which made glad Judea's plain,
When love recrowned the "mercy-seat,"
And God returned to reign;
Then throughout successive epochs
Watched idolatry prevail,
When, the Lord their King forgetting,
All the chosen bowed to Baal.
Saw e'en thrice the nations chastened,
Heard the people sigh and groan,
Then of a Messiah coming,
Who for sin would all atone;
Marked that wondrous heavenly herald
Which before the Magi rose,
And heard angel lips announcing
The prophetic era's close.
Saw the infant Jesus
In a Bethlehem manger laid;
Beheld the great debt of a world's redemption
On Calvary's summit paid
By that fiendish act, unparalleled

In the memoirs of the sky,
When a Saviour God the creature
Whom He'd save did crucify;
Then, in waves of retribution,
Came to lay Jerusalem low
In the tomb of degradation,
Even as she asked to go.
"Be His blood e'en now upon us;
Let it on our children rest,"
Cried they one and all together,
And the ages doth attest
That e'en so it hath been ordered,
And the centuries doth fulfil,
For among the nations scattered
Israel, outcast, wanders still.
Yet not alone these Hebrew kingdoms
In their fall before my sway:
All earth's peoples, thrones, and sceptres
Have been mine as well as they;
Pre-existent and succeeding,
With their compeers every one,
For behold! I brought to being,
Saw them strong and then undone
Furnished each successive station
In the fitful round of power:
Morning's promise, noon's fulfilment,
Gathering shades, and evening hour.

Stood for every tongue the sponsor,
Childhood upward bore to prime,
Then their glorious manhood guided
On to age and its decline.
Led the family march to statehood,
Weakly tribes to nations vast,
Then adown the peaks of empire
To the vale which holds the past;
Marked the tides of Egypt's grandeur
Breaking high on famous strands,
Then anon the waves receding,
Illustrious wreck on storied sands.
Beheld the "sun of Persia" rising,
Dazzling, on a cloudless sky,
Then, beneath a fell horizon,
Observed it sink in blood and die.
Saw majestic Rome wax mighty,
Greece's fame grow bright,
Assyria's pomp and Babylon's splendor
Both attain surpassing height;
Watched this wondrous Gentile world
Unexampled power and glory gain;
Then, as the rolling ages passed,
Left it numbered with the slain.
Thus onward o'er
The course sublime
Of long succeeding years
The victory hath been mine.

Mine the smiles,
 The sighs, the tears,
The fleeting days
 With their hopes and fears;
The mingled sorrow and joy
 Which in life e'er dwells,—
Its christening carols
 And its funeral knells;
Its hours of labor,
 Then its nights of relief;
Its moments of gladness
 And its seasons of grief;
Its bright summer flowers,
 Its seared autumn plants,
Its bridal marches
 And its burial chants;
Its morning prattles,
 Its evening hymns,
Its lullabies
 And its requiems.
Mine also the ocean
 Of things finite below:
Its billowy tides,
 With their ebb and their flow,
All the vastness and grandeur
 Which Man hath e'er planned,
That ever was fashioned

Or built by his hand;
All the forms he has moulded,
Every thread that he's spun,
The empires erected,
Or the kingdoms he's won;
E'en the marvel himself,
With his creations all,
Alike and together
Before me doth fall;
For beauty fades
As I pass by,
And greatness finds
A place to die;
Rust and decay
Follow closely my flight,
And soon with deft fingers
Wrap brightness in night.
Old age and hoar hair
To the cradle I bring,
And I bind fast together
Life's winter and spring;
The Nemesis of Nature,
Fate's herald I,
On the highway of seconds
Whence the centuries fly;
For of these I mould moments,
Weld the hours forming day,

And cause the months, years,
And ages to cycle away.
I hold now the present,
But I own all the past,
And on to the end of the future
I'm hurrying fast;
Sounding the march
Of generations
Noting the rise, the growth,
And fall of nations;
And though present
At creation's birth,
Will stand beside
The bier of Earth.
All have, and all below
That yet remains,—
The land with its verdure,
The mountains and plains,
The oceans so boundless,
The continents wide,
The o'erhanging skies
Where the stars doth reside;
Constellations and systems,
With the planets so fair,
These realms grand of space
And yon regions of air,—
All, all, in their glories

And teeming with life,—
E'en creation itself,
With its harmonies rife,—
Alike in their order
Before me must bend,
And, crushed by my burdens,
Together shall end.
Then, from the Grave
Of mortal things,—
In deathless form,
With seraph's wings,—
I'll soar to realms
From whence I came,
The heights sublime
Of heavenly name;
And there for aye
With God and thee,
Will roll the cycles
Of eternity.
Behold thou, then,
Supreme my sway,
Consider whence
I'm called, I pray;
And, in this presence
Vile of clay,
Acknowledge me
Thy child this day.

V.

Immortality to Time.



IMMORTALITY TO TIME.

O TIME! what a hypocrite
And deceiver thou art,
In thus assuming position
And essaying a part
Which well thou dost know
Is as foreign to thee
As thy transitory existence
In its contrast with me!
True, thy reign is potential,
And it springeth from God,
Who o'er all creation—
In its latitudes broad—
Hath ordained thee the ruler
Both of night and the day,
The sign of the rising
And the fount of decay.
And though truly all Nature
Thus before thee must bend,
Just so surely thy thralldom
At this point doth end:

For lo! 'midst the matter
O'er which thou hast sway,
There existeth a property
Distinct from the clay;
And this eternal essence—
For such it doth be—
Is a thing indestructible,
And hence impervious to thee.
What then as an absolute
Conquest appears,—
In the roll of the ages
Begotten of years,—
After all's but the rending
Of mortality's chain,
Preparatory to the advent
Of eternity's reign.
And just here the inception
Of a tale I'll unfold,
Which ne'er to a creature
Hath ever been told:
That whilst thou, in the height
Of thy much vaunted powers,
Hast been running away
With the moments and hours,
Obliterating the present
With thy consuming blight,
And entombing the past

In oblivion's night,
I've followed thee closer
Than ere thou hast thought,
And have brought all thy work
Of destruction to naught;
For I've watched by thy river
Since erst life had its day,
And have caught all thy wrecks
As they floated away;
And to the border-land yonder,—
Far removed from the range
Of the rusting and fading,
Mutation and change,—
I've borne all thy driftings
On the crest of the wave
Which o'erwhelmeth corruption
In its sweep from the Grave;
And there, 'midst the radiance
Of an unending day,
I've reproduced from the dust
And recalled from decay;
I've healed all thy woundings
With the stripes of thy sway,
Recleansed from pollution
And refined from the clay;
I've new-strung thy haltings
Made thy blind ones to see,

Released from thy shackles,
And forever set free;
Thy cares all I've banished,
Caused thy pinings to cease,
And have stifled thy sighings
With the throbbings of peace.
I've relumed every shading
There, regilded thy blight,
And thy nakedness clothed
With the vestments of light;
I've appeased all thine hungerings,
Allayed all thy strife,
And assuaged every thirsting
With the waters of life.
Ay, I've repaid all thy losses
From an exhaustless store,
And have requited the loser,
That he wanteth no more;
And thus, having reclaimed
From thy blastings and dearth,
Mortality's bondage
And the travail of Earth,
I've reinvested with the excellence
Primeval on high,
And the imperishable coronetted
Have restored to the sky;
Taken back to the Father-house,

Whence no more they'll roam
From the inheritance incorruptible
Of their ancestral home ;
But where, e'en like unto suns now,
In the day-dawn divine,
Their orbit's eternity,—
This wreckage of thine.
And of all there's none missing,
Not a fragment astray ;
But every waste reconstructed
Is eternal to-day ;
Every bud that hath blossomed,
Though it perished at morn,
Every herb that did ripen
Ere its tendrils were torn,
Every flower that hath withered
Ere its fragrance was born,
Every sheaf which the scythe
Of the reaper hath shorn ;
Every bloom-burst which only
To the spring-time was lent,
Every mellowing cluster
Which the autumn hath spent,
Every twig which of tenderness
The summer heat's bent,
Every bough which the winds
Of the winter hath rent ;

Every gleam of the dawning
Which scarce saw the day,
Every sunbeam the shadow
Hath snatched from its play,
Every clear sky the mistings
Hath cast o'er with gray,
Every glow that hath wasted
In the gloamings away;
Every sowing to ease
That the harvests withheld,
Every planting to pleasure
That the mildews dispelled,
Every calm which the roar
Of the hurricane's knelled,
Every tower which the force
Of the tempest hath felled;
Every treasure the shiftings
Hath caused to depart,
Every tie that the rendings
Hath sundered apart,
Every joy which despair
Hath transfixed with its dart,
Every idol bereavement
Hath stole from the heart;
Every fond expectation
That's been buried in tears,
Every hallowed affection

Which recollection reveres,
Every loved form that's vanished
And no longer appears,
Every hope, pride, and trust
That hath flown with the years,—
All, all in the realms
Of blessedness fair,
Full-faced in the sheen
Of the heavenly glare,
'Midst the waftings ineffable
Of its life-giving air,—
All, renewed and immortalized,
Are emparadised there,
Where thy corroding touch
Can ne'er come with its stain,
Nor the burden of days
Oppress them again;
But where unwithering freshness
Crowns the great and the small,
And perpetual youth
Is the portion of all;
Where the skin never furrows,
Nor the face groweth wan,
But the dews of the daybreak
Endureth at dawn;
Where the voice never quavers,
Nor the hair turneth gray,

But the full flush of morning
At noontide doth stay.
Where limbs never totter,
Nor dim grows the eye,
But perennial the bloom
Of the gardens on high;
Where the sense never faileth,
Nor the forces decline,
But everlasting the spring
Of that celestial clime;
Where the past, all encycled,
Awaits thy few years to come,
Up to life's coronation,
When, enthroned, they'll be one;
And then throughout eternity
Trimphantly sing as they shine,
"Behold; once we were wrecks
On the current of Time;
Once we were drift
Borne away by its tide,
Now, on the hill-tops empyrean,
For aye we reside;
Once we were floatage
Tossed about o'er its main,
But 'kings unto God,' now,
Forever we reign,—
Reign e'en in the flesh

Which erstwhile enslaved,
And our crown is rejoicing
That now we are saved:
Saved from the brightness
In whose lustre was shade,
Saved from the blossomings
That bloomed but to fade,
Saved from the foliage
That in its glory was scattered,
Saved from the bowers
Only reared to be shattered;
Saved from the buddings
Which gave promise for naught,
Saved from the fruitage
That ripened to rot,
Saved from the treasures
That were taken when given,
Saved from the ties
Only formed to be riven;
Saved from the friendships
Encompassed by foes,
Saved from the blessings
Encumbered with woes,
Saved from the hopes
Interwoven with fears,
Saved from the mirth
Intermingled with tears;

Saved from the pleasures
 Surcharged with pain,
Saved from the sunlight
 Succeeded by rain,
Saved from the murkings,
 The heat, cold, and blast,
Which thronged the brief day
 Of the finite that's passed ;
Saved from the illusions,
 Contradictions, and strife
Of Earth's fated seasons
 And eras of life,
Saved from mortality
 With its trappings of gloom,
O'er dissolution victorious,
 And redeemed from the tomb ;
For all the ages eternal,
 O departed Time,
We're glorified beams
 In the rising divine,
And, like the stars of the morning,
 In clusters sublime
On the brow of infinitude
 Thy ransomed we shine."
What then, O marauder
 Of frailty below,
But a triumphal car

Is thine engulfing flow?
And what else but pæans
The crush of thy roll,
When these are the victims
And this is the goal?
Or what more the sighings
And roar of thy main,
Save the strainings and breakings
Of the earth-mooring chain?
And what then the furies
Which o'er it doth fly,
But the fair winds that wafteth
The bark to the sky?
A mystery, truly;
Still, its import is seen
All thy throbbings and surges
And billows between;
For doth the moments not pass
Ere the day can appear?
And is not the flight
Of the seasons the year?
And must not e'en these
In turn have an end
Ere the epochs colossal
In their majesty wend?
And like, too, such periods
Of duration grand,

Must they all not have gone
Ere the cycle's at hand?
How wondrously plain, then,
As beyond this we see
That thy sub-astral sway
Is but the prelude to me!
Only the rehearsal,
In a perfunctory age,
For the drama of life
On Eternity's stage;
A period of probation
Granted by love,
To fit and prepare
For endless being above;
A season of tutelage,
Designed but to train
The immortal soul
For its eternal reign.
And since this the purpose
Divine in thy birth,
Alike with the mission
Thou must perish with Earth,
And be only remembered,
In the future to come,
As the course where the crown
Of existence was won.

VI.

Suit of Death.



SUIT OF DEATH.

THOUGH I've heard thee disown
Both Nature and Time,
I'm still bold to speak,
For I know I am thine,
Since oft-time, when the portal I've opened
Some earth-worm to bring,
I've heard royal footsteps
And felt the stroke of thy wing;
While anon from the glowing,
As the gates back I've swung,
Wild pæans of triumph
Thou to me hast sung.
But thou mayest forget,
So I'll recall in a breath:
I'm the great "King of Terrors,"
Though Earth calls me Death;
But no less a sovereignty,
By all of Heaven revered,—
E'en the same, as in Time
And by Hell I am feared.

And while sure all that's needed,
In thy presence fair
To establish my claim,
Is this name which I bear,
Still, before the pretensions
Of this craven band,
Who, to say but the least,
Owe their all to mine hand,
E'en their very existence
Deriving from me,
Or else by my sufferance
Permitted to be,
And yet now so majestic
In this borrowed renown,
As to seek to lay hold
Both of sceptre and crown,
I deem it but due
To my absolute state,
My prowess so grand
Of Omnipotence great,
Here, e'en at thy side,
To publish my reign,
And my suzerain rights
Under God to maintain.
Not, then, in the train
Of a weak, servile horde:
I've come to account

As a prince to his Lord.
List, then, I pray thee,
While a king deigns to say
What glorious trophies
Are strewn 'long his way.
Mine is a throne that's builded
On the wreck of beauty's bowers;
A banner first that floated
O'er Love's dismantled towers;
A sceptre that was given
In Life's accouchement room;
A sway that, all the ages long,
Commenced 'mid Eden's bloom;
For Earth had yet its morning,
And Man his natal day,
While all of Time was yet sublime,
In purity's array,
A spotless sun still ruled the day
With floods of shadeless light,
While moon and stars, in pristine powers,
Shed glories on the night;
The balmy airs of innocence
Still lulled the world to sleep,
For peace alone was on the throne,
And stormless was the deep.
Immortal sweets yet thronged the scene
And filled the languid hour;

A heavenly breath which knew no Death
Still claimed each fadeless flower;
The desert yet had not been shorn
Of the lily and the rose,
And e'en the solitary place had grace
In plenitude's repose.
The meekly lamb with lion bold
Yet gambolled undismayed,
And the suckling, then, about the den
Of the cockatrice still played;
The universe was still in tune
To hymn its Maker's praise,
And yet the mounts and ocean founts
Were redolent of lays.
E'en the spheres were yet a-ringing
With the angel shouts on high,
At creation's morn, of a kingdom born
To the empire of the sky;
E'en yet the benediction
Was fresh on the lips Divine,—
That Omnipotent word which infinitude heard,
"Blest" are the things of Time;
When lo! the prospect changeth,
Transgression creepeth in,
And God Almighty crowneth me
The punishment for sin;
Then a shudder swept immensity,

And ran through Nature's range,
While all creation stood appalled
Before the awful change
Wrought by my august presence
In this its sovereign birth,
Which wide proclaimed mortality,
And tolled the doom of Earth;
For destruction then, in fiendish might,
Spread blight o'er all the plain,
And in perfection's royal seat
Decay commenced to reign.
The sun took on a sickly glare,
The moon's light then did pale,
And all the wonders of the skies
Were hidden by the veil
Which cast o'er all the world so fair
A dark and venom'd shade,
Which wrapt around in moral gloom
Each couch for virtue made.
Then Time, of brightness all despoiled,
Embarked on a dismal sway,
With nothing left but moments drear
To drag o'er a waste away;
The elements broke their moorings, then,
To the haven's calm on high,
And the lightnings first began to flash,
With thunders from the sky.

E'en the gentle breeze ferocious grew,
While the zephyrs of the leas,
Aroused to fury, swept the strand
And lashed to foam the seas;
Then the flowers began to wither,
And the leaves commenced to fall,
For autumn came to shroud the spring,
With winter for its pall.
Base passion, then, by guilt released
From dungeons foul of Hell,
The vanguard of a host depraved,
Sought out the heart to dwell;
Malice then inflamed the breast,
And vengeance fired the brain,
While these devouring monsters gave
To land, the air, and main.
The adder then began to sting,
The wild beast sought his prey,
And e'en the hand of sovereign prince
In wrath was raised to slay;
Then I appeared in Paradise,
And, ere the morn had fled,
Its glens and groves primeval
Were sepulchres of the dead.
And thus commenced that conquest grand
Which, like a mighty wave,
Hath ever since through Nature's realms

Swept matter to the Grave.
But come, behold my triumphs,
See the wonders of my reign,
With the crowns of glory wrested
From the brow of being slain ;
View life's gorgeous, glittering drama,
In splendors set for every age,
And then, behold the desolation
Which I've wrought upon the stage ;
Note humanity's wondrous pageant,
All the line of centuries down,
And then look out upon the remnant
Which I've left of Earth's renown ;
Gaze upon a king's triumphal journey
From Eden to the present day
And tell me, Where's the vastness, kingdoms now
Which erst resplendent lined the way ?
Where is the Mede and Persian,
And that of Assyria, too ;
The Chaldean grand and Saracen,
With the God-wrought of the Jew ?
Where now's the Cæsar's empire,
Which dominated the world awhile,
As well the Pharaoh dynasty
That flourished on the Nile ?
And where, too, now is Carthage,
With Tyre and Ascalon,

Busy Thebes, imperial Rome,
Nineveh, and Babylon?
Where, also, to-day is Jerusalem,
By the presence blest Divine,
And where that gorgeous Ephesus
That held Diana's shrine?
Where, also, is gentle Athens,
The home of the cultured brave,
Damascus in its Syrian garden,
And Troy by the ocean's wave?
Where, too, are the lesser splendors
Which thronged these marvels round,
And where to-day can Perga
And Philippi be found?
And where, too, now are the nations
O'er which all these held sway,
And where the pomp and prowess
That crowned their glory's day?
Where alone are the mighty epochs
Which possessed these wonders vast,
And where e'en the Necropolis
Of this stupendous past?
Once it was, aye, and dazzled
With a brilliancy sublime
That shone forth as the noonday
From the zenith of its prime;
For it filled the Earth with wisdom,

E'en called the stars by name,
And drew a world entranced around
The pinnacle of its fame.
It made a captive of the seas,
It chained the fleeting hour,
And held creation in vassalage
In the acme of its power;
And yet 't has vanished like a dream
This matchless long ago,
And scarce a vestige doth remain
To tell of its overthrow.
Gone, all gone, and forever,
With the times that gave it birth,
And e'en its very sepulchre
Is now unknown to Earth;
But sure, sure, 'tis no enigma,
This ruin all to thee,
Since even Man's historian
Accordeth it to me.
Ah, yes, crowns crumble in my grasp;
Before my all-powerful sway
Empire sinks within a night,
And kingdoms perish in a day;
The antediluvian world
I destroyed at a stroke,
And a breath from my nostrils
The Assyrian power broke.

I swept 'long the Jordan
In a fiery rain,
And in a moment wiped out
Both the prides of its plain ;
Herculaneum and Pompeii
I entombed on the lea,
And Tyrus I wrecked
With the tides of the sea.
To Alexandria I came,
In the gorgon of war,
The same unto Corinth,
And likewise to Zoar.
The world's haughty mistress
I smote with decay,
And with dry-rot I wasted
Her compeers away.
All the grandeur of Antioch
I've left in a mound,
And Baalbec colossal
I razed to the ground,
To say naught of the prodigies
I've subverted in wrath,
Nor yet e'en of Chorazin,
Cæsarea, and Gath ;
While to all the rest, mighty,
I've given an end so profound
That not a single trace of them,

Now or hereafter, will ever be found;
E'en their age, with its chronicles
Of the events of old,
Their power with its pillars,
I've consigned to the mould;
All that erst was created
My hand hath undone,
And yet e'en the system
I'm called to o'ercome;
And hence from thy presence,
With my banner unfurled,
I go forth to the conquest
Of what is left of the world,—
Go forth as aforetime,
Girt about with the sword,
A destroyer decreed
And ordained of the Lord.
But here's my commission; see, it reads,
That come to all I must,
That back to Earth all earth must go,
While dust returns to dust;
That from these teeming fields
Of being so green,—
Which the husbandman sowed,
But where an enemy's been,—
Alike with fruitfulness crowned
And barren spots seamed,

Both the wheat and the tares
Must all be gleaned;
Then, the summer being ended
And the harvest-time passed,
The floors will be garnished
And the sheaves shall be thrashed,
The grain taken home
To life's garner on high,
But all refuse, with the stubble,
Must eternally die.
This I received in Eden,
Just at the time of the fall,—
Received it with God-given instructions
To execute it on all;
And since then, as thou knowest,
Ever down through the years
I've swathed creation in mourning
And drenched the world with tears;
Round every fireside
I've scattered my dearth,
And have successively plundered
The households of Earth,
From Adams to Abrahams,
Then on to Sauls,
Of the Hebrews and Romans,
The Greeks and the Gauls,—
Every family and people,

Of whatever name,
That ever had being,
The record's the same:
They came as the flowing,
They went out like the tide,
They were and they are not,
They lived and they died.
This is the simple epitaph
Of all existence o'er,
And the same will yet be written
Of that unborn before.
E'en of the bustling millions
That in the present dwell,
Who now contend upon the fields
Where sires and fathers fell;
Who sojourn 'midst their ruins,
And in their footsteps tread
The narrow span 'twixt coming life
And the departed dead;
For like the flowerets, so are these:
They bloom and fade away
That others, after, may succeed
And share the same decay;
While all of mortal kind to be
In manner like shall fall,
For verily my dominion's scope
Includes creation all.

Ah, yes! wind, flood, and flame,
Pestilence, famine, and war,
With every force e'en of Nature,
My agencies are;
And with these I know nothing
Of either places or Time,
For mine are all seasons,
And I own every clime.
And 'tis the same with life's stations,
Whether high-born or low,
For alike to the palace
And the hovel I go,
Seeking together the rich and the poor,
Youth's bloom and the gray,
Manhood's full prime
And the babe of a day;
Bowing the crowned head,
The priest, sage, and brave,
Alike with the peasant,
Serf, beggar, and slave;
For to all classes and conditions
That exist 'neath the sun,
Inevitably and resistlessly
My warrant doth run.
E'en at being's first dawning,
Behold, I am near,
And on all of its by-ways

I doth ever appear :
 To the sleeper at night
 And the strong in the day,
 To the business man at his desk
 And the child at its play,
 To the rough-handed laborer,
 Toiling hard for his bread,
 And fortune's heir, pampered,
 Who without exertion is fed ;
 To the youth in life's morn,
 With no world-cares as yet,
 And the old wrinkled pilgrim
 Whose earth-sun's most set,
 To the light-hearted husbandman,
 Hopefully tilling the soil,
 And the captive in thralldom,
 Broken down by his toil ;
 To the captains of armies
 And the heroes of war,
 To all that are saved
 From the battle-field's gore,
 To the meek and the mighty,
 The small and the great,
 To the walks of the lowly
 And the princely estate ;
 To the thronged city's street
 And the crowd every one,

Like the blight to the verdure,
In some way I come :
Perhaps in the sunshine,
But oft in the rain,
With scarcely a ripple,
Or in tempests of pain ;
Perchance in the spring-time,
Full as like with the snows,
When the summer is green,
Or the autumn wind blows.
Maybe in the vapors of morn,
Or the cool evening air ;
I've lurked even in flowers,
And been found in a hair ;
But ever, yea, always,
Like the storm in its might,
As the flash of the lightning,
Or a thief in the night.
Besides, I've ten thousand forms
Which I assume every day,
And each one of these
Bears its victims away ;
But however familiar
I thus grow to be,
Mankind hath no terror
That compareth to me.
And hence wherever I find them,

Or howe'er I come,
Dismay dire preecedeth,
While despair doth outrun;
For in anguish they greet me,
And pleadingly sigh,
Cling wildly to life,
And panic-stricken they die.
E'en my very existence
Inspireth with fear,
For none knoweth to whom
Or when next I'll appear;
And in all pursuits of the finite,
On life's every way,
These impenetrable shadows
Render lurid the day.
Paleness steals to the cheek
Of the beauty so gay,
At a single allusion
To the coming decay;
Clouds darken the brow
Of e'en the mighty and brave,
At the bare recollection
They're *en route* to the Grave.
Tremors seize on the noble,
In his high estate proud,
Before one obtruding thought
Of a coffin and shroud;

While ghastly forebodings
Fill the heart of the king,
Born of an instant's conjecture
Of what the morrow may bring.
The waltz becomes listless,
Alarm fills the hall,
For a whisper goes round
That I may dance at the ball;
A shade presides at the banquet,
Its mirth all hath ceased,
For anon comes the dread
Lest I join in the feast.
In every scene of enjoyment
There's a trill in the song,
Based on a vague apprehension,
Perchance, that I'm in the throng;
At all festive gatherings
Distrust mingles with glee,
And all account the uncertainty
Attaching to me;
While on every occasion
Of might or beauty's array,
'Tis the prayer of the multitude
That I stay away;
'Tis the ever-present solicitude
Alike of human homes all,
Lest in the train of the social

I should venture to call;
And a household petition
From castle to hut,
That 'gainst me, the destroyer,
Long the door may be shut.
E'en to workshop and office
These terrors intrude,
And their every plan and design
Doth the phantom include.
"I give pledge," saith the mortal,
"That thus it shall be,
Provided naught interfere:
That the morning we see."
"This and that I'll accomplish,"
Another doth say,
"In case I'm vouchsafed
The requisite day."
"To go there I'm determined,"
Still another makes known,
"If, however, perchance,
The season's my own."
But in all—through all—
A proviso must be;
For thus alone Time is reckoned
On Man's chances with me.
And well taken these fears,
Good grounds for this dread,

For oft one moment's planning
Is the next moment's dead;
Oft I follow the schemer,
Strong in hope, to his bed,
But ere the morn of the promise
His life-day hath fled.
At the scene of construction
Oft the builder I meet,
And the day is not given
In which he sees it complete;
While ere the hour of departure
For the tourist hath come,
I pay a chance visit,
And lo! his journeys are done.
And not a second's ticked off
On the dial of Time,
But tenfold I record
These incursions of mine;
Not a single sun riseth
From the gates of the morn,
But sees a myriad new graves
Ere another is born;
While, as the years roll away
And each epoch hath flown,
My conquests grow numberless,
Then, as generations they're known;
And soon, soon the moment cometh

When the last of life to be—
Like this, its hapless ancestry—
Will quit these scenes through me.
But not alone my appearing,
Whence all of Earth disappears;
'Tis what lies beyond
That the mortal most fears;
'Tis the future uncertain,
Of which I am the door,
That all through his journey
Is the spectre before;
'Tis the dark realm I open,
When the world fades from sight,
With its ghastly surroundings,—
That's the ghoul of his night:
That hereafter mysterious
Into which I'm the way,
With its untried realities,—
That's the ghost of his day;
A veritable eternity,
Of which Time hath no chart,
That only my coming
Will reveal to his heart.
Eternal cycles of being
His every sense must endure,
But in what state or condition
Nothing here to assure;

That dread region infinite
Which no ray relieves,
And hence peopled with horrors
As his fancy conceives.
Ah! this is the frenzy
Of ominous roll,
And thus I lead captive
Both body and soul;
But this all I heed not,
My work must be done,
And that shall go on
Till it blots out the sun;
Then o'er creation triumphant,
In my majesty fell,
I'll reign on forever,
Death eternal, in Hell.
Hence with this glorious past
And grand future to come,
If thou e'er hadst a kinsman,
I am that one;
For my sway in all things
Is coequal with thine
O'er the two grand divisions
Of the kingdom divine:
One of the glowing,
The other of blight;
Thine of the rising,

Mine of the night ;
The heights of the heavens
In their glory of thee,
With the depths of despair
In subjection to me.
In regal alliance
I'm therefore thy peer,—
Thou the crown of God's love,
I His sceptre of fear.



VII.

Immortality to Death.



IMMORTALITY TO DEATH.

O DEATH, of life
Supreme the shade,
The penalty for sin
By Godhead laid
On existence all
Of finite birth,
That, transgressing, fell
With Man on Earth,
And verily, as such,
Divinely crowned
The autocrat of being
Within this bound,
Whose sovereign power
E'en Time defies,
And at whose feet
All Nature dies,
'Tis not in me
To rob thy state,
Of resistless sway
And trophies great,

But simply 'midst
Thy reign so fell,
The hidden glories
Of thy rule to tell;
For a seraph e'en
Thy boast to hear
Of an absolutism
Maintained through fear,
Would sure conclude
Some hellish art
Had formed thee
For a baser part,
And bid thee roam
Creation broad,
The destructive engine
Of a monster God,
Whose highest aim
And chiefest joy
Was to create
And then destroy;
When in very truth
Thy force malign
Is mercy manifest
In love Divine,
Which, moved with compassion
At the fall,
Decreed through thee

Complete recall;
And even thus
Hath loosed guilt's chain,
And brought the famished
To the fount again,
Of whose healing waters,
Welling high,
They who drink
Shall never die,
But, yielding up
All mortal strife,
In thy embrace
Escape to life,
And in the freedom
Blest I give,
On the altitudes eternal
Begin to live;
For that below,
Existence called,
In fleshen cells
Securely walled,
Tugging ever
At the chain,
Beating 'gainst
The bars in vain,
Sighing e'er
At prison doors,

Prostrate prone
 On dungeon floors,
Bleeding, bruised
 By slaver's stroke,
And crushed beneath
 The bondsman's yoke,
Doth only bear
 The princely name;
'Tis but the spark,
 I am the flame.
And yet the heritage
 Of the skies
Bids this ember
 To its birthright rise;
But in the call
 It must be free
To answer God
 And destiny,
And hence the rescript
 And decree
Which forms and vests
 The work in thee.
Not, then, O Death,
 With tyrant's frown,
Oppressor's sceptre,
 Or the despot's crown;
Not with the spoiler's

Torch and spear,
Nor conquest's fetters
Forged of fear,
Time's hapless victim
Fast to bind
Eternity's chariot,
A slave behind;
Not with destruction's
Wasting might,
Canopied round
With clouds of night;
Nor yet with trumpet
Blast of doom,
In spectral train
Of mortal gloom,
With fury's fangs
And horror's maw,
To full avenge
The broken law;
But as a courier
Of the skies,
Who with a blessed
Message flies
Forth the imperial
Court above,
On the wings
Of rescuing love,

In the sovereign
Parent's name,
To the child
Immured in shame,
From the whirlwind
And the wave
The heir immortal,
Redeemed, to save.
O harbinger royal
Of the soul's release,
Thy kingly mission
To the Earth is peace,—
Perfect, satisfying,
Abiding peace,—
Within whose fold
All conflicts cease.
Such peace these realms
Hath never known
E'en 'midst the bowers
Of Eden flown;
That peace which yieldeth
Costlier things
Than e'er the train
Of conqueror brings.
Life peace, which breathes
Of an existence hence,
And speaks of Heaven

And recompense ;
Tells of crowns
For crosses,
Of infinite gains
For finite losses ;
To the disconsolate
Murmurs, "Blest,"
Gently whispers
To the weary, "Rest;"
To the wanderer says,
"No more alone ;
For behold, I call thee,
Exile, home."
And is liberty, then,
So great a bond
That e'en the slave
Doth dread her wand ?
Is gloom so precious
To the sight,
The blind, affrighted,
Flee the light ?
Nor yet of pain :
Is it so sweet
The tortured fear
Relief to meet ?
Or hath trial sore
So much to charm

That release but comes
In dire alarm?
Or can it be
The banished groan
When summoned back
To land and throne?
Ah, Death! a mystery dark
May thee surround,
But "Terrors' King"
Must yet be crowned,
And nothing but
A trammelled mind,
In its dismal
Earth-house blind,
Where the mills
Of fancy grind,
And its spectres
Lodgement find,
Could e'er have builded
Thus for Time
So weird a shape
From the sublime.
But since, in fact,
This error's sown,
It is but meet
The truth be known;
Hence, of this exit

From below,
Whence life's upward
Currents flow,—
Whether in zephyr
Whispers low,
In the howling
Tempest's blow,
Sudden blast
Or waftings slow,—
'Tis a royal way
These earthlings go.
Ay, the only bliss
Beneath the sky—
If Man but knew—
Is that to die,
And did he see
As I could tell,
Each moment here
Would be a hell;
But truths like these
Are under seal,
And this the utmost
I may reveal.
Suffice it, then,
This statement plain:
For mortal things
"To die is gain."

All Nature this
Doth understand,
And, with a gorgeous,
Lavish hand,
Throughout all climes,
The air, and sea,
E'en like a bride,
Adorns for thee.
The sun reserves
His loveliest ray
To gild the bier
Of passing day,
The moon her fulness
Doth attain,
But as a shroud
In which to wane,
And, like the planets,
So they burn,
Ever brightest
At their orbits' turn;
The spring puts on
Its best attire
To grace the hour
It will expire;
While summer fair
Her grandest sheen
In joy assumes

To be thy queen ;
And so the autumn,
Winter, year,
Fleeting age
And rolling sphere,—
All worn and wearied
By the past,—
Resplendent greet
Their king at last.
And if to these
Of Earth supine,
Destined to run
Their course in Time,
A hand which decks
With glory o'er,
What tongue may tell
For Man the store?
For lo! to him
Thy presence brings,
Though all unseen,
A spirit's wings,
With which he flees
The jailer clay,
As well the realms
Of carnal sway.
Mounts expectant
To the skies,

Where the peaks
Of prospect rise,
And, from creation's
Topmost crest,
Surveys his Heaven
And soars to rest.
And 'tis thus, O Death,
The shades that spring
From 'neath thy feet
Have lost their sting;
Thy prowess, however,
No one may deny,
Though only a servant
Traversing the sky;
And to life's latest hour,
In the Earth-land below,
Awe mingled with glory
About thee shall glow.
But talk not of kinship;
That ne'er could be,
Since between us there lies
An impassable sea,—
A vast yawning chasm
Full as deep and as wide
As that which perdition
And the heavens divide.
And likewise of the future

Spare also thy breath,
For even in Hell
There is nothing of Death;
No, no, alone for the Earth
Is the work thus begun
Which e'en Time here shall see
All completed and done,
And then for eternity
Thy race will be run.
Poor king! after all thy conquests
Thou must perish alone,
Without any friends
And deprived of thy throne,
But not until
The last heir's home.



VIII.

Declaration of the Grabe.



DECLARATION OF THE GRAVE.

I DWELL by life's river,
My castle's washed by its wave,
And all its tides rest in me,
For I am the Grave;
With the advent of sin
I came to the throne,
And since then I've reigned
O'er creation alone;
Relentless Death, here so regal,
And despotic Time, worn,
Have both been my vassals
Since first I was born;
For I am their sovereign,
Their liege lord and king,
And to me every instant
Some tribute they bring.
And even if these
Have no portion in thee,
Surely some of thy glory
Belongeth to me;

For the wide world is my realm,
All its forms are my prey,
And I hold all my prisoners
Forever and aye,—
Hold them in chains
Which no earth-power can break,
In fortresses impregnable
Which no storming can take;
Hold them so tightly,
Securely, and well,
That none ever escape
Of the bondage to tell;
But there in the silence,
With mould and decay,
I sweep every vestige
Of the earthy away,
Leaving naught of the objects
Once of love, pride, and trust,
But a fond recollection
And a handful of dust;
A brief record of life,
A rounded-off mound,
A slab of white marble marking
A home in the ground,
Which tells of one born,
And the date there beside,
Next the length of the journey,

Then the time that he died;
And these I've built everywhere
By mount, wood, and sea,
And you'll find them wherever
Life's wont to be:
Find them deep in the forest,
And in the jungle as well,
Far down in the tropics
And where the Esquimaux dwell;
Find them in the midst of the hamlet,
Where the church-yard they crown,
Great and grand near the city
And on the hill by the town;
Find them in bronze
Memorials for the ages to come,
And fashioned of sea-weed
Where its undertows run;
Find them wherever
There has e'er been a birth,
And where life e'er has dwelt
At any time on the Earth:
Oft-times unpretentious,
Neglected, alone,
With nothing to mark,
And e'en the dweller unknown;
Or perchance locked in the fastness
Of the waste or the deep,

Of which only Omniscience
The record doth keep;
Then again, massive, imposing,
Lofty, and grand,
Towering in splendor
O'er the great of the land,
With symbols emblazoned
And sculpturings crowned,
Veritable palaces
For ashes renowned.
But though a pompous exterior,
Wealth, or might adds to fame,
Alike for sovereign and serf
The bed is the same;
For I've no state and no stations,
No rank, titles, or caste:
These all are of life,
And, like life here, are past.
Whether, then, in mausoleum gorgeous
Or lying bleached on the sand,
The sleep's just as sweet
And the rest is as grand;
But chance times they are larger,—
Built for an Anak or Saul,—
Though among the vast number
You'll find those that are small,
Wee, tiny things, but

High prized as the rest,
For they hold buds that have faded
From maternity's breast,—
Hold many an idol
From life's altars torn,
For whom, in sackcloth and ashes,
Stricken worshippers mourn ;
Hold many a darling
Round whom love's chains yet twine,
And for whom, in their absence,
Hearts sicken and pine ;
Hold many a jewel
Too costly to stay,
So in these vaults of safety
I have laid them away :
Away from life's ills,
Its pitfalls and snares,
Away from its heartaches,
Its sorrows and cares,
Away from its sighings,
Away from its tears,
Away from the burdens
That increase with its years ;
Away from the frosts
That blighteth its flowers,
Away from the dangers
That lurk in its bowers,

Away from the poisons
That infesteth its air,
Away from the canker
That corrupteth its fair;
Away from the tempests,
Away from the storms
That beat on its noondays
And obscureth its morns,
Away from the hurricanes
That sweep its seas o'er,
Away from the furies
That lasheth its shore;
Away from the labors
And heats of its days,
Away from the monsters
That prey 'long its ways,
Away from its shades,
Its shadows, and blight,
Preserved from its evening
And saved from its night.
Others, however, hold
The great of the Earth,—
The learned, famed, and mighty,
With the children of worth;
Hold apostles and prophets,
With the patriarchs, too,
The kings and the judges

And chief priests of the Jew.
Hold Methuselah the aged,
And David's son wise,
While in this same Pantheon
Strong Samson lies ;
Hold the Cæsars and Pharaohs,
And the Herods as well,
While here also both Darius
And Belshazzar now dwell.
Hold the cohorts and legions
Of the armies of old,
Centurions, chief captains,
And warriors bold ;
Hold the head that designed
And the hands that have built,
The sweet faces of innocence
And the dark forms of guilt ;
Hold the tongue of the sage
And the heart of the brave,
The barretted brow of the priest
And shackled limbs of the slave ;
Hold all duration o'er,
With its greatness and glory,
Its matchless traditions
And unchronicled story ;
Hold its years and its ages,
Its winters and springs,

Its tribes with their chieftains,
 Its nations and kings;
Hold the pride of their rule
 And the pomp of their reigns,
The fabulous life
 Of its cities and plains;
Hold its days and its nights,
 With their God-given signs,
The miraculous works
 Of its wonderful times;
Hold its moats and its mansions,
 Its temples and towers,
Its marts and metropolises,
 Its piles and its powers;
Hold its loves and its longings,
 Its fannings and fears,
Its gush and its genius,
 Its transports and tears;
Hold its vices and virtues,
 Its lore and its lust,
Its majesty and misery,
 Its dazzle and dust;
Hold all that's existed
 Since creation's morn,
And soon I'll build others
 For that yet unborn:
Build them for the future,

As I've done for the past,
For I hold the first Man,
And will soon house the last
In these quaint, quiet villas
Where no life-din is heard,
Where the dwellers by none
Of Earth's commotions are stirred;
But where the warrior reposeth,
With his battles all o'er,
And the foeman's dismayed
By the carnage no more;
Where the sailor sleeps on,
All unmindful the blast,
And the mariner's dream
Of the shipwreck is past;
Where the care-burdened pilgrim
Forgetteth his load,
And no clarion awakens
To the sighs of the road;
Where the oppressed and tormented
Are exempt from all woes,
And security's unbroken
By the appearance of foes;
Where the fearful and anxious
A great refuge hath found
In peace as majestic
As the slumbers profound;

Where the anguish-racked brain
 With lasting silence is filled,
And the trouble-tossed heart
 Forever is stilled ;
Where no wail of sorrow
 Breaks in on the sleep,
And eyes never open,
 Heavy laden, to weep ;
Where the bosom ne'er heaves,
 And the tongue lisps no sigh,
Where weary hands, folded
 'Cross triumphant breasts, lie ;
Where the brow hath no cloudings
 And the temples no throb,
And ne'er tired grow the feet
 Which of ashes are shod ;
Where all earth-blows are ended
 And all flesh-aches hath fled,
Where a calm, all unruffled,
 O'er the sleepers is spread ;
Where the cold never enters
 And heats never come,
Where storms never beat
 And the tides never run ;
Where the days are unrecorded
 And the years have no page,
And no note e'er is taken

Of fleeting epoch or age;
But where life, denied entrance,
Is heard of no more,
And all its ills and vicissitudes
Ne'er pause, passing o'er
These vast hamlets lowly,
Fashioned of clay,
Hidden far down
 'Neath the grasses away;
Where the lily first blooms
And the crocus appears,
And the evergreen's lullings
 Resound through the years;
Where the willow-tree weeps
And the cypress doth moan,
And the ivy wild clammers
 Where the lichen hath grown;
Where the sunlight falls softly
And the winds gently blow,
And the clouds e'en are vergers
 For the service below;
Where the spring-time casts blossoms
And the autumn strews leaves,
And winter its mantle
 Of purity weaves;
Where the dawn's rays and the settings
 Doth ever converge,

Where the morn chanteth requiems
And the night wails a dirge;
Where stars are the guardians
Of disquietude's rest,
And Earth folds her children
In peace to her breast;
Where a hush seizes Nature,
And awe fills the air,
As mortality reads
Its epitaph there
On these chapel doors numberless,
Every parish plot round,
Where no dissension in creed
Or doctrine is found,
But where the bigot hath ceased
Of his dogmas to tell,
And both the faithful and heretic
In harmony dwell;
Where no altar awaits
And no church-bell is rung,
Where no anthem resounds
And no censor is swung,
Where no vespers ascend
And no matins are said,
Where no penitent kneels
And no penance is paid;
But where the mitre and crosier

Are eaten of rust,
And the flock, with its bishop,
Hath crumbled to dust
In these mighty towns, humble,
Where no dwellers are seen,
Where naught save the cappings
Appear 'bove the green;
Where the houses are hillocks
Constructed of clods,
Windowless habitations
Roofed o'er with sods,
Where the tenants are myriad,
Yet untrodden the floors,
And knobs inside avail not
On the outswinging doors;
Where neighbors and kinsfolk
Each other ne'er greet,
And no bustle nor babble
Is heard from the street;
But where business hath closed
Its ledger for aye,
And the trance of the restings
Lure the child from its play;
Where the earthy to Earth
Hath taken its flight,
And life-scenes are lost
In oblivion's night;

Where all of its passions,
 Its emotions, and aims
Doth find in the mould
 Blest relief from its claims;
Where anger resides not
 And resentment's unknown,
Where none ever forgive
 And naught can atone;
Where grief is unavailing
 And regrets all are vain,
Where opportunity, lost,
 No remorse can regain;
Where slander is speechless
 And scandal's subdued,
Where alone the virtues departed
 Are recalled and reviewed;
Where faults are forgotten
 And shortcomings concealed,
Where only the past
 In its beauty's revealed;
Where defects all are hidden,
 With dishonor and shame,
Where distortion is swept
 From deformity's frame;
Where all loss and attainment,
 With their pathos and thrill,
In tenements ashen

Are pulseless and still;
Where no poverty pincheth
And no beggar appeals,
Where no charity giveth
And no villany steals;
Where wealth hath no station
And pomp hath no place,
Where position and preferment
Exciteth no race;
Where fortune's no favorites
And beauty no crown,
Where fashion's no votaries
And pride hath no frown;
Where the hero's no worshippers
And the conqueror no train,
Where the plaudits of empire
Will ne'er rouse them again;
Where oppression's no bondsmen
And tyranny's flown,
Where might wields no sceptre
And the king hath no throne;
Where naught can distinguish
'Twixt the pure and defiled,
The prince and the pauper,
The wreathed and reviled,
But where all grades and orders
Alike of nothingness fare,

And on the same mighty level
 Its equalities share
In these grand cities, lifeless,
 Where resideth in peace
The countless populations
 That ever increase ;
For though through Death, ghastly,
 Life doth e'er pass away,
Yet in these lodgings narrow
 All its forms must decay ;
Every shape of the earthy
 Earth claims for its own,
And dust hath its dwelling
 In these mansions of stone.
But more: I'm the shrine of the living
 As well the home of the dead,
The mount of lamentation
 Whence a world's gloom is shed,
A dark vale of privation
 Where Earth's great trials grow,
And its rivers of agony
 Are unstayed in their flow ;
A wilderness of desolation,
 Life's ways lined and crossed,
Where all of its forms
 Disappear and are lost,
And yet the place of all others

Most dear to its heart,
For it marketh the spot
Where its fellowships part,
Marketh the spot
Where its hopes blighted lie,
Where all its possessions
Are borne as they die ;
Where its sweet buds and blossoms
In the morning doth fade,
And its full ripened sheaves
Are at even-tide laid ;
Where the light of its firesides
Is extinguished in night,
And the prides of its households
Are buried from sight ;
Where its greatness descends
And its splendors are lowered,
Where its jewels are housed
And its treasures are stored ;
Where its brightness is garnered
And its joys all are moored,
Where its beauties are captive
And its idols immured ;
Where its eyes ever turn
And its footsteps doth tend,
Where its avenues lead
And its journeys all end ;

Hallowed mounds of affection
Where, unrestrained through the years,
All of Man's generations
Intermingle their tears ;
Where the crown e'en and coronet
Their wanderings keep,
And the gay and the frivolous
Aside turn to weep ;
Where the heart of the wayward
In contrition doth melt,
And throughout enmity's bosom
Compunction is felt ;
Where all rancor and bitterness
From the spirit takes flight,
And estrangement, abashed,
Doth vanish from sight ;
Where nothing save tenderness
E'er lifteth its head,
And regard for the living
Is the call from the dead ;
Matchless stations of friendship,
Meditation's blest bowers,
Where sorrow burns incense
And bereavement strews flowers ;
Where affliction is cherished,
And sacred its womb
And holy the rendings

That are born of the tomb ;
Where memory's a mine
Of gems priceless, untold,
And the mintage of recollection
Is more precious than gold ;
Where love builds its altars
And keeps burning their fires,
Beareth its offerings
And reareth the spires
Of a wondrous metropolis,
Built in the ground,
Where the loved and the lost
Of all ages are found ;
And there, in nameless state enthroned,
I receive existence born,
Possessed of all its yesterdays
And waiting its to-morrow's morn :
Waiting the present's bustle,
Its revelry and strife,
Waiting its pomp, its powers, its pride,
Its argosies of life ;
Waiting the conquering years to come
In triumphal train along,
Waiting their splendors and their spoils,
Their chains and captive throng ;
Waiting the race of mortal kind,
With the course o'er which 'tis run,

Waiting all Nature, Time, and Death,
The universe and sun;
Waiting the system, with its orbs
Which compose this finite sphere,
Waiting to bring the void again
Which was ere form was here;
For all of these, in truth, are mine,
And to me shall surely come
Soon as the gathering shadows fall
And each its work hath done.
But why call I this victory,
Or why such boast as gain,
When the Son of Heaven's God eternal
Hath felt the pressure of my chain?
When the "Fount of Life"
In my domain was found,
And the Creator infinite
In the creature's arms lay bound?
Ah, truly I'm mighty,
But this triumph's sublime,
And it raiseth me up
Till I'm almost divine,—
Raiseth me up to a height
Where I see that, though
Perhaps not in others,
Thou art surely in me,
Who not only subdueth

These broad realms of Time,
But have also led captive
The Sovereign of thine.
Behold, therefore, I pray thee,
All my conquests and gains;
Accept now my kinship
And acknowledge my claims.



IX.

Immortality to the Grave.



IMMORTALITY TO THE GRAVE.

O GRAVE, transgression's
Pale within,
Reigning scion
Of the house of sin,
As the chronicles
Doth evince,
In doom's heraldry
Ruin's prince,
Erected by
Almighty breath,
On destruction's throne
Outranking Death,
Called of Omnipotence
And given place,
Queenly Nature
To efface,
As likewise also
Lordly Time,
Joint participants
In a race's crime;

And though even thus
From Divinity
Receiving realm
And sovereignty,
Still, only crowned
Of matter king,
'Twas an ashen conquest
Thou didst bring,
In that the purpose
Of thy reign
Was through the rot
To purge the stain;
But this, to Justice blest
A guilt oblation,
Dissolution meant
For all creation.
And while e'en this
Is still thy name,
And earth returns
To Earth the same,
As erst in Paradise
Thy sceptre rose,
Material rule
For aye to close,
Yet know, O Grave,
Thy power for ill
The heavens doth now

With unction fill;
For lo! anon
Upon the clay
Which a penal
Force did slay,
Wasting in
Thy caves away,
Back to nothingness
'Neath thy sway,
From out corruption
And decay,
Putrefaction's parade
And worm's array,
With healing beams
In cleansing play,
Reviving glows
Of living ray,
Fringed about
With deathless spray,
Burst the glories
Of redemption's day;
And as its Chieftain
Rent thy chain,
Sought the heights
Again to reign,
Rang through Earth
This glad refrain:

“O Man, thy dust
Shall rise again;
For behold, captivity
I have led—
By the blood
In Death I shed,
With the life
For thee I gave—
Captive e'en
This conquering Grave;
And while supreme
O'er spheres of Earth,
Consuming all shapes
Of carnal birth,
Still list the strain,
Devouring Tomb,
I've made of thee
Transition's womb,
Of which, on incorruption's
Natal morn,
Sublime and spiritual
Shall be born
Glorified structures
In Nature's guise,
But transcending e'en
Celestial skies
In their bewildering

Glare above,
As jewels for the diadem
Of a Saviour's love;
For 'Lord of Glory,'
I am He,
And victory gives
This crown to me."
Hence, though no form
Of human mould
Can e'er escape
Thy putrid hold,
Flee thy portal
Pale and dim,
Nor pass around
Thy castle grim,
'Tis full as sure
No power of air,
Earth, Hell, or Heaven
Can keep it there;
For lo! O corruptible,
There now awaits,
Within the shimmerings
Of pearly gates,
'Neath life's
Everlasting glow,
By its fount's
Immortal flow,

'Long the terraces
Of joy supernal,
'Side the mounts
Of love eternal,
On the thrones
Salvation's gilding,
In the saintly
Mansions building—
Of a Daysman's
Travail done,
And garnished with
The spoils He's won—
Imperial place
And regal rôle
For the body
Like the soul,
And naught inanimate
Or of breath,
Living might,
Nor power of Death,
Present things,
Nor those to come,
Height nor depth,
Nor breadth in one,
Decay's effacement,
Nor extinction's trance,
Shall ever rob it

Of its inheritance.
And, as an earnest
Of the pledge,
Behold, upon
Dominion's ledge,
Above all promontories
Of being broad,
In this self-same
Flesh is God ;
From whence,
Incarnate as before,
In the garb
Through thee He wore,
Deified at
Thy riven door,
"King of kings,"
He'll come once more
In the pageantry
Of Heaven's lore,
With the spirits
Blest of yore ;
Come, of eternity's
Conquest o'er,
To receive
Thy garnered store,
And to this coming,
Lo! thy yoke—

E'en like the glebe
Of earth-land broke—
Receives from reaper's
Hand the grain,
And sows it
Unto life again;
But sows it all
Of shrivelled wheat,
Blasted by
Sin's storm and heat;
Sows it
Of unripened corn,
Which transgression's frost
Hath shorn;
Sows it
Of the withered fig,
Plucked from frail guilt,
Blighted twig;
Sows it
Of Nature's dwarfed vine,
Sows it of the drift
Of Time,
Sows it
In expiring breath,
Sows it with the hand
Of Death;
Sows it

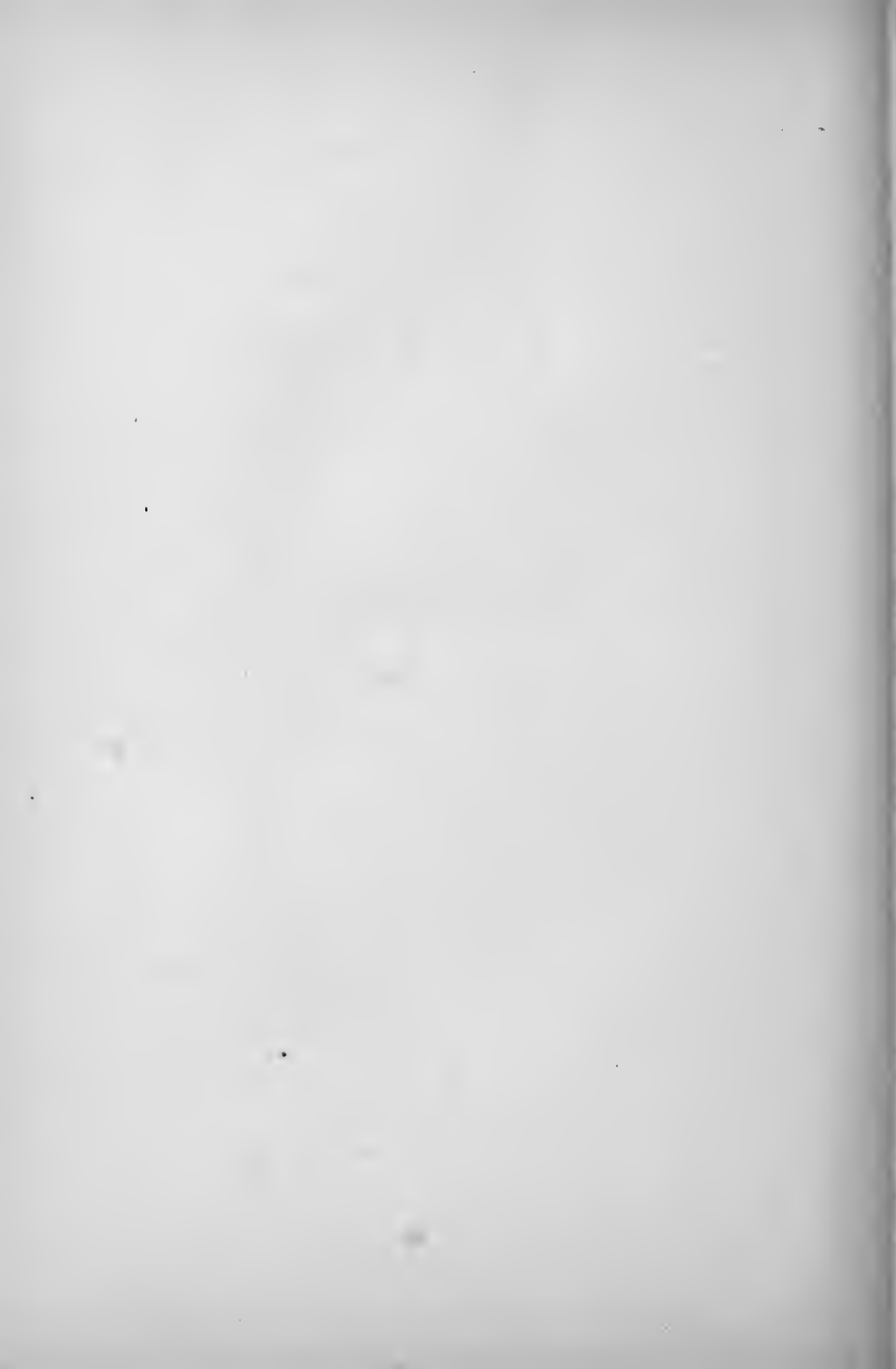
'Neath the clods away,
But ever in dishonor
To decay,
And hence the wonders
That abound,
The inexplicable mysteries
That here are found
By narrowed conceptions,
Of finite sway,
Around a blessed
Resurrection day;
As though the unwasted energies
Of a Creator's power—
E'en the very same
That calls the flower
From out winter's catacombs
Of ice and snow
To the unapproachable splendors
Of the spring-time's glow,
The plumaged chorister
From encasing cell,
Or gorgeous butterfly
Out a reptile's cell—
Could not revive
This human must,
Nor vestments fashion
For the saints from dust.

Why, did He not
At first create—
In the majesty
Of His sovereign state,
And from very chaos
To an eternal fate—
Man's body, a marvel
Full as great
As that which e'er
Will attend its rise
In immortal glory
To its native skies?
And may this God not now—
When of nothing before—
From the ruins of His building
A temple restore?
Ay, verily; but couldst thou
Only comprehend
Thou hast no wreckage
For His hand to mend!
For lo! though all unrecorded
Of prophetic pen,
Account its towering height
O'er terrestrial ken,
And while far removed
From earthly gaze
By surrounding atmospheres

Of mortal haze,
A Redeemer's ransom,
Boasting Grave,
Doth e'en this fabric
From destruction save.
For oh, amazing truth !
On reclaiming course,
It transforms corruption
At its fountain's source,
And, ere the wearer
E'en doth leave,
On the loom of waste
Begins to weave—
Of snapping thread,
And parting strand—
The warp of the raiment
For Immanuel's land ;
And the only change
In thine abodes,
Where putrescent
Mist corrodes,
Is that decay's
Erasing modes—
Augmented e'er
By grub's inroads—
A trifle faster
The spindle loads,

And thus sooner completes
For Heaven the robes
With which the King
His trophies fair
Will full invest,
In realms of air,
At that wondrous
Point of Time—
The last and yet
The most sublime—
When a perfected creation
Forth shall shine,
In the uncreated excellence
Of the life divine,
A nameless satrap
Of Deity
In the cavalcade
Of eternity,
All the immensities
Of infinitude o'er
With its Lord to reign
For evermore.
And hence, O Grave,
Thy vaunted sway,
As well thy realm,
Must pass away,
Nor leave behind,

Throughout all space,
The veriest speck
To point the place
Where thus, in dire
And absolute overthrow,
Existence met
Its foulest foe.



X.

Defence of Hell.



DEFENCE OF HELL.

UNLIKE all these subjects,
My story I'll tell
As becometh a monarch:
My name is Hell,—
A sovereign in all respects
Equal to thee,
E'en though 'twixt our realms lies
An untraversable sea;
And while truly thy reign
Hath been longer than mine,
'Tis not more enduring,
Nor yet more sublime;
For I too am a ruler eternal,
Swaying a sceptre divine,
With a throne just as stable
And a crown bright as thine;
Possessed of a kingdom as mighty,
A domain just as broad,

Clothed with powers fully as absolute
As e'er were given by God;
Hence be pleased to remember,
While my tale thou dost hear,
That I come not as a suppliant,
But to speak as thy peer;
Hearken, therefore, I pray thee,
While I, a prince brother, relate
The glorious work I perform
In this immortal state.
Far back in the cycles,
Ere Nature had birth,
Before Time commenced to number
The epochs of Earth,
Ere Death o'er creation
His dark banner unfurled,
Or a gluttonous Grave
Began to prey on a world;
Before these skies e'en were fashioned,
Or these orbs did adorn,
Ere constellations appeared,
Or these systems were born,
Before immensity was peopled
With on-rushing spheres,
Or the comet took flight
On its round of the years;
Ere the thunders saluted

Their Maker on high,
Or the lightnings shot forth
From His throne in the sky;
Ere these stars rose to twinkle,
Or yon suns dawned to shine,
Long anterior to Man's advent
'Midst the children divine;
But while yet all was chaos,
Save the heights blest of thine,
'Twas then the Godhead erected
This black empire of mine;
Built its walls massive, eternal,
Its towers for aye to endure,
Gave it gates everlasting
And foundations secure;
In profound isolation
Reared it far off, alone,
In grim, awful grandeur,
Beings damned for a home;
Filled it with terrors transcendent,
Of which none can conceive,
That no tongue may tell
And no creature believe;
Gave it such depths
Of despair, gloom, and woe,
That e'en eternity's too short
To the bottom to go;

Shrouded it in darkness,
Then of fate fixed the reign,
So that none passing its portals
Would e'er forth come again ;
Named it " Abomination of Desolation,"
Then wrote o'er its gates,
" Here divine retribution
The transgressor awaits,
For here every scourge
Of God's vengeance is stored,
And all of the vials
Of His wrath are outpoured
On the head of each subject
Who rebels 'gainst His throne,
For which crime damnation
In these depths must atone."
Thus sin's eternal doom sealed
And its dwelling ordained,
The judgment pronounced
And the penalty framed,
God called me to being
In this His decree :
" O Hell, in my Justice
I will hence reign in thee,
For to execute this
On those who defy,
I must needs have a prison

For the palace on high.
I have therefore created,
And while to thine hand
I consign now forever
This traitorous band
Of beings once angels
Resplendent in light,
Whom guilt hath transformed
Into demons of night,
I give thee commission,
All the future to be,
Death eternal to visit
On all crime against me,
However existent,
Or wherever found,
Throughout immensity's wastes
To infinitude's bound;
And, with this my rescript,
I to thee impart
Both the power and discernment
To establish thy part,
And thus add to my reign
What to law must be given,—
The terrors of Gehenna
With the glories of Heaven.
I therefore make thee my viceroy,
And here proclaim thee abroad,

Prince Sovereign of Perdition
In the peerage of God."
Having thus by Jehovah
Been called to a throne
Which, in point of stability,
Was the peer of His own,
I at once took my place
In His Almighty reign,
And, as Deity's inquisitor,
I came in the train
Of His creative majesty,
On its Omniscient rounds,
As He fashioned the worlds
With which His kingdom abounds,
And as system by system
To His empire was given,
I tested their fealty
And reported to Heaven.
Hence when these low realms
Of the finite had birth,
I followed creation
To the Eden of Earth,
And there, 'mid the scenes
Of a Creator's rest,
In the garden of innocence
Which His presence had blest,
I first beheld Man,

In the image Divine,
The Lord of a world
And its wonders sublime,
Swaying the sceptre
Of dominion at large,
With land, ocean, and air
Given o'er to his charge,—
A being so Godlike,
Majestic, and pure,
That 'twould seem as though
The heavens—which forever endure—
Must sooner have fallen
Ere he could transgress,
Or his allegiance to God
E'en an instant repress;
And yet I had only to offer,
Then of safety assure,
And his fall was complete
And his end was secure;
For humanity's prince—
Representing a race—
That moment was banished
For aye from the face
Of an all-holy God,
Who then decreed that he roam
Through Time's dreary wastes
Till Death brought him home

To the abysmal depths
Of damnation's sea,
The full, eternal reward
Of his credence in me ;
And from that day to this,
In an unbroken throng,
His sin-stricken children
All the centuries long,
With hope all abandoned,
In trembling and fear
Have madly rushed to the fate
Appointed them here,
Where the guilt-tainted wretch
Of Earth's every age
Doth find that crime's freedom,
After all, 's but a cage
Filled with birds of uncleanness
And vultures of prey
That have stolen both God
And His Heaven away,
And all denuded hath left him,
In the great evermore,
A ghastly skeleton wreck
On that eternal shore
Where the thunders of wrath
Doth unceasingly roll
And the tide-waves of vengeance

Engulfeth the soul
In ruin as boundless
And destruction as wide
As the prison-house infinite
In which they reside;
Where the chain bindeth fast
And the bars are unwrenched,
"Where the worm dieth not
And the fire is not quenched,"
But where sin's every shade,
And e'en the semblance of guilt,
On the sword of Justice
Are empaled to the hilt;
Where every stain on the soul,
In all its blackness, returns
And, inflamed by its venom,
Everlastingly burns;
Where treachery's cunning
And hypocrisy's dash,
Unmasked and accursed,
Are stung by the lash;
Where infidelity's teachings
And heresy's tongue,
'Midst the torments of verity,
All the future are dumb;
Where blasphemy's scoffings,
With its jestings profane,

Doth reap of the whirlwind
Its seedings of shame;
Where the greed that oppresseseth
And the mammon that begs,
Of the cup of damnation
Doth drink to the dregs;
Where vice and depravity
Are consumed by their lust
In the flame which reduceth
What it feeds on to dust;
Where vanity's tinsel
Is singed of its gloss,
And pride's only mooring
Is its eternal loss;
Where all the ruined of Earth,
With the fallen of light,
Shut out from God's presence,
Forever sink in the night
That hath no silver linings
To its dark clouds of gloom,
No hope-ray to soften
The terrors of doom,
No chance of escape,
No deliverance day,
No hand that can snatch
From these torments away;
No relief from these wailings,

No discharge from these fears,
No surcease of sorrows,
No end to these tears,
No calms for these sobbings,
No draught for this thirst,
No balm for these hearts
Which in agony burst;
No rest for the weary,
Nothing bright for the sad,
No promising future
To cheer and make glad;
But ever the same,
Only deepening apace
As the cycles unending
Roll onward through space;
Deeper and deeper,
Down, down they go
To new scenes of torture
And torment below;
Farther and farther
From the sainted above,
Farther and farther
From God and His love,
Finding each instant
Some lower place to dwell
In the ever-deepening gloom
Of a bottomless Hell.

Horror of horrors,
Pandemon's land,
Peopled with demons,
Devils, and damned,
Where turmoil and strife
In hideous uproar abound,
Where despair gnaws the soul
And the canker-worm's found;
Where wild cries for deliverance
Ever pierceth the air,
And the dragon Remorse
Ne'er returns to his lair;
Where passion's unbridled
And lust's not restrained,
Where appetite's no bounds
And vice goes unchained,
With nothing to satisfy,
Naught ever assuaged,
No power to conciliate
These monsters uncaged;
No place of refuge
For which to take flight,
Nothing left but to sink
In eternity's night.
Such, then, my kingdom,
Thus sin-built the throne
On which—God's minister of vengeance—

I reign supreme and alone,
With an archfiend for chancellor,
Legions of demons whom his edicts obey,
Ever forth in the Earth going,
Seeking souls for their prey.
But no appearance like this
On yon side the skies;
There the Hell-garb's discarded
For some attractive disguise;
For though my agencies myriad
Are of the lowest depths here,
Yet as Heaven's own chosen
They in Time doth appear;
Imps of blackness
In raiment white,
Hideous devils
As seraphs bright,
Monsters of wickedness
In holy places,
Fiends infernal
With cherubs' faces,
Destruction's emissaries
In saints' attire,
Offering life
On its funeral pyre,
Perdition's minions
Lulling sense

By a tender of bliss
As the recompense,
Covering up bitterness
'Neath a coating of sweet,
Feeding Man ashes
In the semblance of meat,
Masking corruption
With the health-glowings pink,
Concealing the precipice
With flowers at its brink;
Tempting with honors,
Bribing with gold,
Yet ne'er telling the price
At which these are sold;
Alluring with pleasure
And the joys that entice,
Leading captive with passion
And ensnaring with vice;
Wreathing the cup
With innocent mirth,
Yet hiding the horrors
To which it gives birth;
Presenting place and position
As the sum total of good,—
A stone now for bread
And a serpent for food;
Giving darkness for light,

Taking brightness for gloom,
Asking Heaven for Hell
And glory for doom ;
At all times appearing
As exponents of right,
Decoying the unwary
To these regions of night.
And how well they succeed,
Thou hast only to class
Here at Death's gates
The numbers that pass
Each hour, aye, each instant,
And then thou wilt see
That I receive thousands
Where one goes to thee ;
And this steady strain
Of the lost ones thus won
Will never diminish
Till these earth-years are done,
And then, for the future—
But that's needless to tell,
For well dost thou know
There will e'er be a Hell,—
A Hell deep as infinitude,
Like immensity broad,
O'erflowing with torment,
And eternal as God ;

Hence, in view of this record,
'Tis the boast of my sway,
I'm in all things thy peer,
And thou canst not answer nay.

XI.

Immortality to Hell.



IMMORTALITY TO HELL.

OH, hideous monster!
Black demon of woe!
'Twas surely wisdom divine
That fixed thy portion below,
That established thy dwelling
In regions of night,
Abandoned of God
And shut out from His sight;
That, far down in a corner
Of immensity, built
Thy vaults of corruption
And thy sink-holes of guilt,
Whence the howls of the damned
Could never ascend,
Nor the stench from the rotting
Would ever offend;
There is no other place, surely,
In eternal realms wide,
Save these lowlands infernal,
Where thou couldst reside;

Thou art e'en truly so loathsome
As scarce to seem fit
To e'en have a home
In this horrible pit,
Of whose pollution and terrors
I ne'er told need be,
Now that mine eyes
Have rested on thee;
And yet—the chief monster fiend
From this den—thou art come
With devilish effrontery
To claim we are one.
Does the prison-house ever
To the palace compare?
And pray tell me, since when
Are dungeons so fair?
Since when hath the garb
That the convict doth wear
Been stamped with the impress
Of royalty there?
Since when hath his fetters,
That dismally clank,
Become the insignia
Of regal order or rank?
Or since when hath the cage
Of the prisoner, alone,
Attained to the majesty

Of the dais and throne?
Since when hath the famished,
Appealing for bread,
Supplanted the children
Who at the table are fed?
Since when hath the transport
Or the crushed galley-slave
Succeeded the ruler
Who doth pardon and save?
Or since when hath the shrieks
At the gates of despair
Been changed to hosannas
Greeting the heir?
Since when hath realms cursed
Lost their mantle of woes,
Or the hot arid waste
Began to bloom as the rose?
Since when hath the depths
Ascended on high,
Or the lowest part of creation
Been transformed to its sky?
Or since when hath sovereignty
Ceased wielding the rod,
Or thou—prince of devils—
Become the compeer of God?
And yet all this, impossible,
Would first have to be

Ere thou e'en couldst obtain
An acquaintance with me.
Thou art at best a creation,
And that of order so low
That Infinite knowledge alone
Can thy depravity know;
Yet, hideous, abandoned,
And vile as thou art,
Eternal Justice created,
Then gave thee a part
In the Divine administration,
Once only of love,
Till angels, transgressing, fell
From high orders above,
And for these convict and outcast
Came this prison-house plan;
'Twas never conceived of
Nor intended for Man;
But he,—an eternal creation
Of the heavenly King,—
In their stead 'twas decreed
A new homage should bring.
Not that light would e'er miss
Its few bright, banished ones,
Or skies immortal be dimmed
By these blotted-out suns;
For had the heavens e'en fallen,

Still their Builder would reign,
And He ten-thousandfold grander
Could have created again;
But, of that inscrutable wisdom
Which hedgeth His throne,
He fixed Man the chief light
In His creative zone
Invested him with the image
None other had borne,
And conferred His own likeness
To perfect and adorn;
Breathed the life of eternity
Into his frame,
Then gave him a world
To control in His name;
Of all other beings
With him held converse alone,
E'en descended the heights
And appeared in his home;
For already with semblance
He'd implanted an infinite mind
With capabilities only
By His Omniscience defined;
And had naught ever obstructed
This avenue broad
Which led from the creature
Direct to his God,

Had nothing e'er marred
This intercourse sweet,
In which the Eternal and finite
As in friendship did meet,
Man, borne aloft by the forces
Of its divinely-translating leaven,
Would have become a prince of immortals
And Earth a suburb of Heaven.
But away, away with the possibilities
Of what once might have been ;
They're monstrous realities,
Not the ghosts of it, seen ;
Not merely some vague
Phantomed wonder that fell,
But the form and the substance
Of thy torments, O Hell ;
For 'twas these built thy dungeons,
With their gloom, blight, and dearth,
Stole brightness from Heaven
And its monarch from Earth,—
Ambitious possibilities
That forth with angels were thrust,
That called the Lord of creation
Back from glory to dust.
And just here lies the secret
Of all pollution and thee :
God, all holy, the Sovereign,

But the creature made free,
Given freedom to act,
Left untrammelled to choose,
God's love and His Heaven
To retain or to lose.
Angels possessed this, but perverted
And of their own volition fell
From the topmost heights of the heavens
To the nethermost Hell,
Whence, on temptation's voice borne,
Into Eden it came,
And Man surrendered his birthright
To destruction and shame.
But, ere the full measure
Of his ruin was wrought,
All the energies of Deity
To the rescue were brought.
God saw and He pitied,
Then this promise He gave:
"Behold, once I created,
But now I will save,—
Save from the blackness
Of carnal night,
Save in the majesty
Of my Godhead's might,
Save from the doom
Of mortal strife,

Save by the power
Of an endless life ;
Save, yea, in all respects worthy
The Daysman shall be,
For I lay hold on one
Who's Almighty to free,
One whom my Justice
Doth accept in Man's place,
One all sufficient
To atone for a race,
One upon whom
The debt now is laid,
One who assumes it
And will see it all paid,
One who will ransom,
And, having purchased, will be
A sure guide to lead
Through the lowlands to me ;
And while Death hath dominion,
And the Grave, too, shall reign,
They but refine from the dross
And doth cleanse from the stain ;
For in them, and through them,
The price goes before
That my love all doth purchase
And my Heaven restore."
And though it required an eternal offering

To thus redeem from the loss,
Though the way led through flesh
And by a manger and cross,
Though it bowed down the heavens
And made vacant His throne,
Yet in His own all-holy person
'Twas accomplished alone.
Amazing humiliation,
Condescension sublime,
This self-abnegation
Of the Sovereign Divine;
Marvel of marvels,
E'en in angelic ken,
God Almighty descendeth
To the rescue of men!
Not, however, in the plenitudes
Of a Creator's fame,
Not in the sublimity
Of the Ruler's name,
Not in the prowess
Of Jehovah wroth,—
"With the chariot of Israel
And the horsemen thereof,"—
Not in the van
Of a heavenly train,
Illumed with the wonders
Of eternity's reign,

Not e'en 'midst the suit
Which a vassal brings,
Much less with the retinue
Of the "King of Kings;"
But forth from the panoply
Of Omnipotent might,
Out of the effulgence
Of its blinding light,
Dropping the symbols
Of Almighty sway,
Casting the vestments
Of Godhead away,
Laying aside
An eternal crown,
From all dominion
Stepping down,
Unattended,
All alone,
The measureless altitudes
Of infinitude's throne,
Before archangels'
Astonished gaze,
Immortal princes
In bewildered daze,
'Twixt flaming seats
Of startled seraphim,
Through the wondering ranks

Of the cherubim,
'Midst celestial hosts
In mute surprise,
Legions of angels
With dazzled eyes,
From rank to rank
He downward wends,
Order by order
Still descends
'Long the lists and files
Of the heavenly glories,
By the principalities and powers
Of immensity's stories,
'Cross the domains
Of world-thronged space,
O'er the wilds
Where meteors race,
Into the realms
Of finite birth,
By the planet's course
He reaches Earth.
Calls not the bivouac
From its "hills of night"
To yield attendance
On the "Prince of Light,"
Awakes not its spheres,
In anthems sublime,

To publish the coming
Of the Sovereign Divine,
Unchains not its elements
To thunder abroad
The incarnate advent
Of their Creator God,
Impresseth not to His service
The orb of its day,
Takes but a star
To gild Deity's way,
And, in the gleam
This herald throws,
Still down and down
And down He goes,
Past imperial palace
And royal dome,
Princely residence
And viceregal home,
Avoiding governor's mansion
And templed wall,
The sanhedrim's court
And the judgment-hall,
Aside alike from the noble's
And the fellah's door,
The shepherd's tent
With its native floor,
E'en away from the inn;

Then, gracious God, where?
Behold, in a stable,—
Life's Sun riseth there;
The Omnipotent Suzerain became
Of an outlawed clan,
"God's Messiah"
A lonely Man,
The "Centre of Being"
Was given birth,
The "Source of Knowledge"
Learned of Earth,
Immensity's Proprietor
Went unfed,
Creation's Builder
Had no bed,
The "God of Angels"
Wept alone,
The "King of Heaven"
Had no home;
Infinitude's Almoner
Must need endure,
For God's Eternal Son
Was poor;
Nature's Upholder
No succor found,
The "Judge of the Universe"
Was a prisoner bound,

The "Lord of Hosts"
Was mocked, defied,
And the "Prince of Peace"
Was crucified;
The "Ancient of Days"
Was clothed with Time,
Jehovah Infinite
Did flesh entwine,
Omniscient Deity
Was taught to see,
The "Ever-Living"
Began to be;
The "Almighty Creator"
Had a natal morn,
The "Eternal Father"
As a child was born,
The great "I Am"
Drew mortal breath,
And the "Fount of Life"
Expired in Death.
He celebrated His advent
'Midst the brute kind, a stranger;
A homeless babe of penury,
Was hedged with danger;
For His very life
Was forced to flee
The mountain-pass,

By night, to Galilee;
Endured a childhood of hardship
Which passeth belief,
Was "A Man of Sorrows,
And acquainted with grief;"
Was mocked by the mighty,
By the wise laughed to scorn,—
A despised Nazarene,
E'en of Bethlehem born;
Was jeered by the populace,
Called impostor and fraud,
"A Wine-bibber and Glutton"
Who claimed to be God;
Was derided by princelings,
"Friend of Sinners" was styled,
By the nobles traduced
And the masses reviled;
Was persecuted by the priesthood,
By the elders contemned,
By hirelings convicted,
And the rulers condemned;
Was set upon by the multitude,
By the mob was misused,
By the soldiery scourged,
And the rabble abused;
Was spit upon by a creature,
By a friend was denied,

By a robber supplanted,
And a felon defied;
Was deserted by followers,
From kindred affection hurled,
The prey of a disciple
And the victim of a world.
Depths of depravity!
O Hell, can it be
That this is the ransom
Which alone saves from thee?
Heights of the heavens,
What an infinite price,
When God Eternal Himself
Was the sacrifice!
Oh, how the wonder deepens
Into unutterable sublimity
Before this vicarious mission
Of God's humanity!
Well might immensity marvel,
And the hierarchies of eternity be dazed,
And the watcher of Earth fall prostrate,
Transfixed with awe, as he gazed
On that crowning spectacle august
Of Jehovah's redemptive plan,
As it laid a God on the altar,
A penal offering for Man.
For Man? ay, and he the rebel

Against the one who gave,
The defamer, persecutor, crucifier
Of Him who came to save.
Surely the Divine humility
Must here have kissed the floor,
For e'en Almighty condescension
Could humble and abase no more :
Earth's salutations to its Redeemer came
In a stable stall of oxen breath,
And 'midst a convict train it bade adieu
With a felon's cross and a malefactor's death.
Eternal Justice!
Where were thy lightnings sheathed ?
Avenging Godhead !
By whom came this guilt reprieved ?
Hosts of the Infinite !
Whither garrisoned thou didst not see ?
And what power, O Shechinah,
Withheld the stroke by thee ?
And yet, with no eye to pity,
No friend to cheer apace,
Refused the succor of Heaven
And denied His Father's face ;
But surrounded by foes malignant,
The butt of insulting voice,
He yielded Himself in atonement
Of His own, His Godhead's, choice.

But, oh, the eternal import
Of this scene of Deicide!
'Tis bridging the infinite chasm
Which holiness and sin divide.
Oh, the everlasting significance
Of these expiring groans!
They mean that perdition's dungeons
Are changing to Heaven's thrones.
Oh, the inestimable conquests
Achieved in this fleeting breath!
'Tis robbing the Grave of victory
And plucking the sting from Death.
And oh, this crimson torrent
Which from His side doth flow!
'Tis cleaving a passage to glory,
While it floods the road to woe.
But hark! "'Tis finished," the Conquerer cries,
"Guilt's captives now are free,
And God henceforth is love again,
For all wrath hath been spent on me.
Henceforth an exhaustless fountain floweth here
Which cleanseth from every stain,
Where all the dying of the Earth
May life and Heaven regain.
Henceforth a deathless beacon's set
On this topmost hill of Time,
And on the road which leads to life

Its light shall ever shine ;
While henceforth to Earth's latest hour
This cross shall point the way
To the rich possessions of my love
Which my blood makes free this day.
E'en to the mansions of the just
I go now to prepare,
And henceforth a single glance this way
Will enthrone the vilest there."
Heaven, transported, heard the cry
Of a world redeemed from sin,
And the everlasting doors uplifted were
To let the King triumphant in,
Who came in pomp and majesty
Back to His sovereign reign,
With every foe beneath His feet,
E'en thou in His captive train ;
And there, above all heights exalted,
Earth's ransomed ranged before,
He takes up His royal diadem
And studs it with jewels o'er ;
And there throughout a glorious eternity
Shall the throne-room's arches ring
With the "Glory, glory, hallelujahs!"
Which these redeemed will sing,—
Sing in transporting strains triumphant,
Surpassing e'en seraphs' powers,

“Thrice blessèd ever be His blood,
For its wonders all are ours.”
E’en now a host hath gathered there,
Yet on and on they come
To join the Conqueror in the feast
Of eternal victories won ;
While ever, ever through Death’s waste
The Master loud doth call,
“Behold, O Earth, Life’s banquet waits,
With tables spread for all.”
E’en for the vilest of the vile,
The basest of Adam’s race,
Ay, e’en for a Saviour’s murderers
Is here reserved a place.
“Only accept,” the Host doth cry,
“The bidding which I give ;
Come to this marriage feast of love,
Here sup with me and live :
Live for eternity here at home
In the Heaven of heavens with me,
An immortal, glorified purchase of the blood
Which in Time I shed for thee.”
Ah, to the heights God gives His presence,
Still the depths His wonders know,
From the heavens above His glory shines
And His justice reigns below ;
E’en to the confines of immensity

His goodness doth provide,
His hand sustains the rolling spheres
And doth the planets guide;
While His love, enduring, boundless
As the eternity it enfolds,
Extendeth to all infinitude
And its every atom holds;
But for rebellious, sin-cursed Earth—
A speck in His empire wide—
Was reserved the marvel of His reign,
Since there for Man He died;
And yet, despite this matchless ransom,
Unmindful how erst he fell,
The creature follows yet his will,
And, an ingrate, sinks to Hell;
For in all His eternal vastness,
With the might which is its goal,
E'en God, without the sinner's sanction,
Cannot save a single soul.
But why should I to thee
This stupendous tale unfold,
With its infinite conception
And mysteries manifold?
Or why, to an object
So abandoned as thee,
E'en allude to the blessedness
Transcendent in me?

Surely not to excite thine envy,
But only to let thee see
How utterly lost to self and God
Are all who go to thee;
Not because of might or aught enticing
That could delude or Earth hath craved,
But simply that the sinner chooseth
To be lost instead of saved;
For no creature ever reached thy gates
From the range of entreaty's voice,
But, headstrong, persistent, went to Death
Of his own free will and choice;
No mortal yet's been swept away
By thine all-engulfing tide,
But sank forever 'neath its wave
The veriest suicide;
And not a single solitary soul
Will ever feel thy gloom
Till first 't has trampled atoning blood,
And who then may mourn its doom?
Truly, Heaven hath no regrets for these,
Nor will e'er the ransomed sigh;
The "light of life" will only brighten
As these falling shadows die;
Only will the song of triumph
Its full power and range attain
When the last of foes is captive

And the rebels all are slain.
Then, with naught to mar the celebration,
Naught to slight redeeming love,
Ever grandly through the cycles
Will life's anthems swell above,
Nameless, peerless, priceless
As the object they adore,
Glorious, boundless, endless
As the source from whence they pour.
Life! measureless and unwasting
As the Fount's eternal flow,
Freely, fully by its Author offered
To each erring child of woe ;
Love! all-sufficient, yea, and anxious
That the lost of Earth be saved,
And that ere thy gates stood open
Solely came of wills depraved ;
Ay, more: at thy portals e'en
This love e'er stands
With piercèd side
And bleeding hands,
Calling by name
Each passer-by:
"Ho! ye blood-bought,
Why thus die?"
No, God never damns
What He creates ;

Men, like angels,
Choose their fates;
Death makes no change
For good or ill,
The sinner is
The sinner still;
Hence what he wills
In Time to be
He carries with him
To eternity;
Carries his foibles
Great and small,
Base propensities
And habits all;
Carries his envy,
Malice, scorn,
The sordid tastes
Of his passions born;
Carries his filthy
And foul desires,
Loathsome appetites
With consuming fires;
Carries his hatred
Of the pure and just,
Arrogance and avarice,
Greed and lust;
Carries the stains

Of his sinful life,
The wounds and scars
Of unhallowed strife;
Carries the trappings
Of his secret shame,
The unmasked blackness
Of an apostate name;
Carries his infamy,
Guilt, and crime,
Contempt of Heaven
And things divine;
Carries his every sin,
With its blight and dearth,
And is just in the future
As he left the Earth,
Only possessed
Of what Death hedged here,—
The limitless license
Of a deathless sphere.
If, then, such be thy subjects,
How needless to tell
That 'twixt thee and me
Their choice would be Hell!
For how could such ingrates,
Base rejecters of love,
Be ever content
In its mansions above?

How, think you, such beings,
Who delight to profane,
Could e'er eternally sing
Of a Redeemer slain?
Or what kind of manna
Could Paradise give
On which these polluted
E'en a moment could live?
Or how could these children
Of sin's lowlands and night
E'er endure an eternity
On the mountains of light?
Why, its very airs would be stifling
And its calms would oppress,
Its pursuits would be torture
And its joys would distress,
Its brightness would burn
And its pæans would grind,
Its holiness blister,
While its glories would blind;
Not a single vale in its borders
Would offer repose,
And all of their sojourn
Would be burdened with woes;
For of the country's blest millions
Not one would they know,
And 'midst a city of palaces

Have no place to go.
God, therefore, not of wrath but compassion,
In thee doth provide
A vast eternal cavern
Where all such can reside,
Have life as they wish it,
Untrammelled and free,
In the fathomless depths
Of depravity's sea ;
Ever deeper to sink there
As the cycles on wend,
Undisturbed by the prospect
Of reaching an end.
Such, then, O Hell, 's thy boasted empire,
Thus thy realms perdition span,
The doom heritage of rebellious light,
But mercy's legacy to defiant Man.



XII.

Prayer of Man.



THEN, as each rebuked, despairing shadow
From her presence forth did flee,
With a mien benign, majestic,
Life's exponent turned to me,
And in tones the Muse might envy,
Such melody thrilled their gentle flow,
"Come, my child, come closer," said she;
"What is it that thou wouldst know?
Hast thou longings after rest?
Seek to be forever blest?
If so, then what's thy behest?
What of me wouldst thou request?"



PRAYER OF MAN.

OH, I said, I'm but a waifling
Cast upon a cruel world,
Conscious only of existence,
'Mid its scenes of sorrow hurled ;
Nothing but a bit of wreckage
Tossed about on waves of life,
Battling ever 'gainst disaster,
Overwhelmed in seas of strife ;
At the best a wretched exile,
Pilgrim in a foreign land,
Wasted in a hostile country,
Famished on a desert strand,
All without my will or sanction,
And in which I've had no voice,
Given form and place and being
All regardless of my choice ;
Ignorant even where I came from,
How I live, or whither go.
Ah, that of all doth most concern me,
That's the thing I fain would know ;

Here I find myself existent
In a low-down twilight sphere
By its shades and gloom enveloped,
Groveling 'neath the slavish fear;
Of its blinded sight begotten,
Of its mysteries given birth,
Binding fast with carnal fetters
Mortal bondsmen to the Earth,
Whence no faith provideth pinions.
Naught inspires the soul to flight,
But each chain-tug of the captive
Only brings a deeper night
To this understanding finite,
Close immured in fleshen walls,
Where no pæan e'er resoundeth,
And but one deliverer calls;
From the black-damp of the dungeon,
From the pressure of its chain,
From the bars 'gainst which the spirit
Casts and breaks itself in vain;
From this dismal gloom surrounding,
With its heavy stifling air,
From its noxious breath outpouring
Withering blight on all that's fair;
From these lurid skies o'erhanging,
By the tempest rent and torn,
From the darkness ne'er uplifted,

From this night which hath no morn ;
From these unrequited labors,
From the toil which leaves a stain,
From this grief-rewarded effort
With its recompense of pain ;
From these broken, shattered idols
In the temple of my love,
From my hopes all worn returning,
Tired of wing, like Noah's dove ;
From the cares which here beset me,
From the ills that press me sore,
Piercing e'en to being's centre,
Burning to my bosom's core ;
From the breakers round me surging,
From the tide-wave's threat'ning roll,
Battering down the outer casement,
Rushing frenzied on the soul,
Only one escape doth offer,
That as horrid as to stay,
Dissolution's portal yawning
O'er the vortex of decay.
Still with hope all crushed, abandoned,
In mine anguish day by day
Anxious yearn I for the freedom
That will loose this bond of clay,
That will open wide the prison
Where I've sighed and languished long,

Rend its bars and bolts asunder,
Sever from its fleshen thong;
That will end my lease of sorrow
In this plague-infested hall,
With its pain-racked frame and timbers,
Ready any hour to fall;
That will let me out this earth-house,
Beat upon by every blast,
On the sands of Time receding
To an all-effacing past;
That will rescue from this island,
Far removed from passing sail,
With its solitudes unbroken
Save by ocean roar and gale;
That will call me from my exile
In this alien land unkept,
Where the ages all have languished
And each careworn pilgrim wept;
That will break this fever fitful,
With its feeble, fluttering breath,
From it all release and save me,
Even though it be by Death.
A ghastly source of freedom, truly,
Yet what else hath life to cheer?
Earth is but a horror chamber,
Nothing's worth the living here;
Nothing worthy e'en the having,

Aside the labor to attain,
Nothing worth the bare possession,
Much less effort to sustain;
Nothing in this cursèd Earth-land
Save duration filled with blight,
Straggling rays of hope which endeth
In despair's pervading night;
Little scraps of pleasure floating
On unbounded seas of woe,
Patches small of calm o'erdotting
Howling wastes where monsoons blow;
Wasted springs of peace commingling
With the tides of mortal strife,
Droppings few of comfort sinking
In the sands of human life,
Barely seen as they are passing,
Hardly felt and little known,
E'en unto a vapor likened,
Scarcely fashioned till it's flown;
Scarcely a scene of beauty outlined
Till it fades before the eye,
And no thing of joy o'ertaken
Ere it findeth wings to fly;
Hardly a sip of sweetness tasted,
Then the draught doth change to gall,
And no loving structure raisèd
But 'tis shaken to its fall;

Barely a touch of aught that's lovely,
When the hidden thorn appears,
While the mirth that wreathes the features
All too soon is bathed in tears.
Earth's delights are therefore phantoms,
Mundane trusts reposed in clay,
Finite bliss the veriest mirage
Drifting o'er life's wastes away,
Glorious Edens of the fancy,
Like its castles, wondrous fair,
But whene'er I seek the substance,
Lo! I find 'tis all of air;
Fruitful Canaans in prospective,
Rich in harvests plain to see,
But my footsteps press the desert
Burning where these seemed to be;
Bashan's vales, in contemplation
Cool, inviting to the mind,
But of strife and desolation
Are its valleys left behind,
Like the happy days of story
In the by and by for me,
Or the ships with treasure laden
Sailing to me o'er the sea,
Are these glows in Time deceptive,
Illusive mists upon the sands,
Spectral streams which only madden

Thirsty hosts in arid lands ;
Where the things the most substantial
Are the very first undone,
And the founts that seem exhaustless
Prove to be the soonest run.
All is transient, naught enduring,
Change is stamped on all below,
E'en existence, like the flood's wave,
Leaves but a memory of its flow,—
Solely a thought of the seconds
Which in every heart-beat fly,
To the moments brief and fleeting,
And the hour hath hastened by ;
Merely a breath of the morning,
And noon-tide hurries fast,
Then the after-glare and evening shade,
And thus the day is past.
Only a glimpse of the spring-time
Till summer's heats are on,
Through autumn's fading to winter,
And then the year is gone ;
A vanishing vision of childhood,
As youth towards manhood tends,
A world of care, then tottering steps
To where the journey ends ;
A season brief of waking,
Of slumber a trifle more,

From the toil a little resting,
Then the troubled dream is o'er;
A dweller only in the present,
The past all gone before,
And nothing ever of the future
Save its knockings at the door;
An animated bubble called being
Dangling at the end of breath,
Life amid life's ruins,
Existence in the arms of Death;
Groping among the sepulchres
Of ancestors and sires,
By kindred wreck environed,
'Tis born and then expires,
Sinks to the mould that bare it,
A crumbling earthen crust,
Through the night of putrefaction
Back to its natal dust;
A weary, fitful journey
Through scenes of carnal gloom,
O'er a rugged pathway leading
From the cradle to the tomb;
A thorn-strewn, stony highway
Trod by the flesh-bound slave,
Yoked to his own mortality
And hastening to the Grave;
In the doleful caravan

Of earthly years,
Freighted with humanity's
Hopes and fears,
O'er sterile waste,
Through vales forlorn,
A dreary pilgrimage
To an untried bourne ;
A rough, tempestuous voyage
On an angry wave-lashed sea,
O'er fell wastes of waters stretching
Through Time to eternity ;
A dismal outward passage,
The main by no ship recrossed,
Borne under by the surge's roll
And high on the billows tossed ;
An atom of human frailty
On an ocean wild afloat,
Essaying to breast the maelstrom
In a stoved and sinking boat ;
A heavy-laden, laboring craft,
Fierce swept the gale before,
A water-logged, dismantled hulk
Drifting on an unknown shore ;
A bitter, wasting conflict
'Gainst numberless assailants rife,
Beginning with the birth of Man
And waged through all his life ;

A fierce, unequal struggle
Which bath for each a part,
And rageth in the kingly breast
As well the peasant's heart;
A warfare every day renewed
The mortal's years along,
Till sobs become his war-cry
And groans his battle-song;
For Grave rest's the only trophy
Which doth inspire "the line,"
And Death the only victor
On the battle-fields of Time.
Still, e'en this is life's fair vision:
What then can the dark side be,
With its depths of human sorrows,
Fathomless as the Ægean Sea?
When the strong of Earth grow weary
'Neath the burdens of the load,
What a tale could pain-racked pilgrims
Tell of trials 'long the road?
If Time's favored ones are famished
'Midst luxurious ease and gold,
What would be the poor man's story
In the fight 'gainst want and cold?
And when e'en the world's exalted
Find but misery in renown,
Who may name the waves of anguish

That o'erwhelm the trodden-down?
And yet, 'mid all this ruin,
My soul seeks a higher plane,
A more substantial heritage
And a more exalted name;
It longs for a land of freedom,
Exempt from all mortal claims,
That hath no carnal rendings
And knows no fleshen chains;
It yearns for a realm eternal,
Uncorrupted by decay,
Where reigns in fadeless splendors
The joys of endless day;
It sighs for a haven peaceful
Beyond these swelling tides,
Where, 'midst the calms of stormless seas,
A glorious rest abides;
While here within my bosom
A something whispers o'er,
"These desires are only foretastes
Of what doth lie before,
Only the faint outlinings
Of nameless things to be,
Reflections dim of wonders grand
These eyes shall one day see."
To like effect there comes a voice
From that revealed Divine,

And oh, what raptures these inspire
In this poor heart of mine!
For if in truth such be the case,
What need I further care?
How insignificant all ills of Time
When classed with glories there!
What trivial things these sorrows are,
Which oft seem mountain high!
When contrasted with the recompense
That awaiteth them on high!
How abject mean this slavish fear
Which faltereth in the fight,
Before a coronation morn
On the palaced hills of light!
What veriest play this earthly toil,
How light this mortal load,
When Life Eternal's the reward
And Heaven doth end the road!
Or what a peaceful, blessed calm
Pervades the ocean's roar,
Around the bark, however frail,
Bound for a deathless shore!
But anon doubt-shadows gather,
Unbelief doth cloud mine eyes,
While 'midst contentious reasonings
The hope-ray, drooping, dies
And leaves me in the darkness

To grope as best I can,
A creature of despair begot
By the sophistries of Man;
For while I fain would heed the voice
Which e'er through my spirit rings,
And accept as truth the teachings
Which the page of Scripture brings,
Still this limited conception earthy
Is powerless to defend,
And must succumb to marvels
Which it cannot comprehend;
And thus amid the mistings
I'm a drifting wreck at sea,
Engulfed by every mystery
Of life and Death and thee;
And hence I turn to human lore
To illumine my darkened mind,
Only in gloom to realize
I'm guided by the blind;
For e'en the sage and wise man,
With the philosophers of the race,
In essaying to solve these problems
Have lost themselves in space,
And have with naught returned again
To supply these crying needs,
Save indeed some theories base,
With numberless conflicting creeds

Which, though in main may be of truth,
And point the upper way;
Are yet so contradictory
As to lead the soul astray;
For while most all men recognize
A deathless part within,
And through some help extraneous see
The only hope for sin,
Still, some sects, ignoring this,
In worldly wisdom wise
Declare that Man must work his way
In trembling to the skies;
And while Almighty sovereignty
Doth alone on God devolve,
To fellow-worms they doth accord
The functions to absolve;
Others still do boldly teach
That religion's in the form,
And only by the ritual
Is Life Eternal born;
That church rites, with its polity,
Is the only leaven rife,
And hence its ceremonials
Are essentials unto life;
Another yet doth ever strive
To let the mortal know
That all there is of punishment

Doth here exist below;
That, despite this moral turpitude,
This sin-guilt under ban,
A glorious future doth exist
For universal Man;
While, opposed to this, another holds
That they God's chosen be,
And only those of Abraham's seed
E'er reach the jasper sea;
That the Christian's hope is all a myth,
The Messiah yet to come,
And by a firm belief in this
Their work for Heaven is done.
Besides all these, an hundred more,
As complex as the mind,
Construct a maze of doctrine
That stultifies Mankind;
While surrounding all vast heathendom,
Embracing most the race,
With the earliest known theologies
Doth also have a place,
And this hath a thousand deities,
With as many systems, too,
And 'midst this host who may decide
Which one of them is true?
But if one's right,—and only one
Could be of all the throng,—

Surely that one's inherent truth
Would right the others' wrong;
And if on good and bad alike
Falls sunshine and the rain,
Verily this wisdom would exist
That all men could obtain;
For beacon ne'er in Time was set
To guide one favored bark,
Leaving all other craft to strand
And flounder in the dark;
The sun must either be obscured
Or else on all must shine;
It can't illumine another's way
And cast a shade on mine;
But that these shadows do exist,
While some claim perfect light,
Is evidence incontestable
Of all-pervading night.
And thus it is some go so far
As even to maintain
That all these worlds uphold themselves
And know no sovereign's reign;
That o'er these wide domains of space,
Throughout creation broad,
The veriest chance doth rule supreme,
And Nature hath no God;
That from the Earth like grass we spring,

Like grass to fade away,
That soul and body together tread
The wine-press of decay;
That all this talk of future bliss
In a glorious Heaven with thee,
As well the tales of endless pains
Through being's infinity,
Are but creations of the mind,
Fantasies of the brain,
Launched forth upon humanity
For profit and for gain.
And this the blackness whence I came
In trembling spirit here,
By saving need oppressed, o'ercome,
And crushed with mortal fear;
But now that mine eyes hath seen
The splendors of thy throne,
Raised to a blest futurity
Which may be made mine own,
And since that mine ears hath heard
Of the life revealed this day,
The only want I e'er shall feel
Is guidance by the way.
I therefore ask of wisdom
Which boundless dwells in thee,
Knowledge sufficient to be wise
For all eternity;

I seek of that light effulgent
Which beams o'er thy realms alone,
A single ray to mark the road
And be my beacon home;
While at thine hand a life-chart,
With a compass, I implore,
A pilot, too, to bring my bark
To an immortal shore;
And since in truth a Heaven's above
To which the righteous fly,
And while in fact a Hell awaits
The wicked when they die,
Show me, I pray thee, O my light,
The upper-leading way,
The road that to a deathless strand
Doth lead, through Death, from clay;
Teach me to live, while yet on Earth
The years may for me run,
In manner pure, sublime, and true,
That to thee then I'll come
And find in glory by thy side,
Through all the cycles blest,
The "living waters" framed in seas
Of Heaven's eternal rest;
Lead me gently by the hand
'Long a world's alluring wares,
Safely my footsteps ever guide

Past all its traps and snares ;
Direct me o'er life's tangled road,
 Hold fast my helm at sea,
Full equip me for the fight,
 And may it end in thee.



XIII.

Immortality to Man.

IMMORTALITY TO MAN.

OH, thou poor benighted earthling,
Child of sorrow, sin, and shame.
In the bonds of guilt enslavèd,
Branded with a felon's name,
Yet withal the heir presumptive
To a kingdom in the skies,
Doomed to Death, but yet retaining
That within which never dies,
Glad am I to learn thy story
And to hear thy spirit's cry,
For of need must come the pinions
That will bear thy soul on high;
Only he who seeks the fountain
Stoopeth ever at its brink,
While alone the parched and thirsty
Cometh to the wells to drink;
Famished ones they are who cry out
For the satisfying bread,
And the heart must feel its hunger
Ere it asketh to be fed.

All the wisdom then existent,
E'en the light of Heaven's day,
Would for naught avail the pilgrim,
Lest indeed he sought the way ;
But to him through want inquiring,
Needless is it e'er to roam,
While of truths the first revealèd
Is that Earth is not his home,—
Not the place of his abiding
Is this wrecked and storm-swept shore,
For, with Eden's bowers in ruins,
Hope of life for Time is o'er ;
All that here could e'er sustain it
Hath departed with the wave,
And the only thing remaining
Is its journey to the Grave ;
Every force below doth deaden,
Outright kills, or wastes away,
Hence these realms have no conditions
Under which the soul could stay.
Too much mildew,
Too much blight,
Too much shadow,
Too much night,
Too much freezing,
Too much heat,
Too much rainfall,

Too much sleet,
Too much changing,
Too much flow,
Too much shifting,
Too much blow,
Too much misting,
Too much fog,
Too much marsh land,
Too much bog,
Too much desert,
Too much steep,
Too much jungle,
Too much deep,
Too much refuse,
Too much dross,
Too much lichen,
Too much moss,
Too much friction,
Too much rust,
Too much canker,
Too much dust,
Too much breaking,
Too much wear,
Too much rending,
Too much tear,
Too much blemish,
Too much stain,

Too much trial,
 Too much pain,
Too much striving,
 Too much fray,
Too much crumbling,
 Too much decay,
Too much Death
 On this twilight sphere
For aught to attain
 Perfection here.

Not enough of sunshine,
 Not enough of calm,
Not enough of comfort,
 Not enough of balm,
Not enough to strengthen,
 Not enough to cheer,
Not enough that's open,
 Not enough that's clear,
Not enough of morning,
 Not enough of air,
Not enough that's beautiful,
 Not enough that's fair,
Not enough of spring-time,
 Not enough of bloom,
Not enough of altitude,
 Not enough of room,
Not enough of freshness

Not enough of light,
Not enough that's joyous,
Not enough that's bright,
Not enough of melody,
Not enough of lays,
Not enough of rapture,
Not enough of praise,
Not enough of innocence,
Not enough of youth,
Not enough of blessedness,
Not enough of truth,
Not enough ennobling,
Not enough inspires,
Not enough that quickens,
Not enough that fires,
Not enough that's holy,
Not enough that's pure,
Not enough substantial,
Not enough secure,
Not enough enduring,
In all these realms so wide,
'Midst which a thing eternal
Could e'en in the flesh reside,
Well enough for grasses
Whose life is but a day,
Well enough for flowerets
That bud to fade away,

Well enough for dew-drops
Which, glistening, disappear,
Well enough for leaflets
That last but a season here,
Well enough for babbling brooks
Which e'er through lowlands wend,
Well enough for rivers broad
That on to oceans tend,
Well enough for birdlings
Which plume their wings for flight,
Well enough for fleecy clouds
That soon are lost to sight,
Well enough for harvests
Which ripen but to fall,
Well enough for summer's bloom
That sears at autumn's call,
Well enough for torrents wild
Which vanish with their flow,
Well enough for passing storms
That perish as they blow,
Well enough for angry waves
Which break on rock-bound strands,
Well enough for rain and flood
Absorbed by parchèd lands,
Well enough for changing skies
Which darkness shroudeth o'er,
Well enough for restless seas

That wash a pilgrim shore,
Well enough for sterile wastes
Enslaved in thorny bands,
Well enough for deserts drear
Engulfed by shifting sands,
Well enough for polar wilds
Which the frost-king bindeth fast,
Well enough for tropic realms
Consumed by torrid blast,
Well enough for fleeting days
Which e'er with eve decline,
Well enough for terrestrial orbs
That alone 'mid shadows shine,
Well enough for grovelling things
All futureless here alone,
Well enough for brutes and beasts
That have no other home,
Well enough for objects
Which these earth-realms satisfy,
But scarce a dropping for the thirst
Of souls which cannot die:
These all require the changeless scenes
Of heights eternal born,
The Almighty vigor, heavenly dews
Of everlasting morn,
The calms of a sinless Eden
Which may not pass away,

The radiance grand, unending,
Of uncreated day,
The unwasting floods of shadeless light
Which beam from cloudless skies,
The living green of Canaan's fields
Whose verdure never dies,
The bloom of Omnipotent fulness
Luxuriant in fadeless bowers,
The sweets of immortal fragrance
Exhaled by deathless flowers,
The airs of immaculate purity
Wafted those high realms o'er,
The unwithering spring-time of delight
Which reigns o'er a graveless shore,
The founts of God-given waters
Forever flowing, blest
Salvation welling up to life
In tideless seas of rest,
E'en the raptures of a residence
With Redemption's Lord above,
The glory reigning in His presence
Through an eternity of His love.
And hence for these imperishable,
With a destiny divine,
Life hath but its dawning
Behind the hills of Time;
This is but the seeding,

The harvest's by and by,
And then o'erflowing garners
Of blessedness on high;
This is alone the season
For the dressing of the vine
To a glorious, priceless vintage
In a more exalted clime;
Only this the quarrying,
Beneath a torrid sun,
For a nobler temple building
In a better land to come;
Merely here the hewing
On the hill's bleak sides alone,
But the King says, after Lebanon
Is eternal rest at home
In a palace bright of glory,
Designed for the heir to be,
On the site of a Saviour's purchase,
But of stones here shaped by thee.
In view, then, of this heritage,
It doth behoove each one
To seek at once the allotted task,
Nor weary when it come;
For every single human being
On the Earth some place doth fill,
And to each, whate'er his station,
Comes a mission to fulfil;

Perchance 'tis 'mid surroundings lowly,
 Maybe on peaks of greatness grand,
Still, before him God sets duty,
 Work of life for heart and hand;
And till this is all accomplished,
 And the course is fully run,
Man is like the mountains round him,
 Deathless till his work is done;
But when Death at last o'ertakes him,
 Sure it is Time's part's replete,
Thereafter in the boundless future
 The framework's set and made complete;
Likewise every soul doth have its burdens
 In the vale of mortal night,
But remember 'tis 'mid shadows
 Thou art building unto light,
And e'en though each earthly toiler
 Bears some heavy cross through Time,
That affliction is the sculptor
 Sent to deck the house Divine;
While of other woes assailing,—
 Pangs and heartaches every one,—
These are all of wayward sowing
 Or of heedless labor done;
Hence every root of bitterness
 Which in thy life is found
Hath sprung of thought and action

With which that life is crowned;
All these thorns and thistles
Which in thy pathway grow
Are but the ripening harvests
Of the seedings long ago;
While all this ashen fruitage
Which is thy present store
Hath come of thine own planting,
In unguarded hours, before;
For as the tree so is the fruit,
The grain doth the seed's form keep,
"Of whatsoever, therefore, thou sowest,
That also thou shalt reap."
And though this sowing's all
For another sphere,
The first-fruits of the harvest
Are always gathered here;
Though the planting and the dressing
Is all for other lands,
Some clusters of the vintage
Are pressed by earthen hands;
And though the hewing and the quarrying
Is all for realms divine,
The foundations of the structure
Are ever laid in Time;
While of all the varied builders,
Weak and strong, the small and great,

Unto each the task's apportioned
Which for place doth compensate.
Then act well thy part,
Whate'er it be,
Since all are building
For eternity:
Building on the rock
A house to stand,
Or quaking huts
Upon the sand;
Castles immovable
By the mountain's wall,
Or tottering hovels
On the beach to fall;
Palaces for Heaven,
On its heights to dwell,
Or hideous dungeons
For the slopes of Hell.
Lay, then, in Godliness
Foundations sure
That to all the future
Must endure,
Fashion of piety
A structure grand
That shall rear its dome
In a nobler land,
While of holiness build

A temple bright
That will shine resplendent
On the hills of light;
Then, 'midst the crash
Of world 'gainst world,
As sun and system
Are to fragments hurled,
When tongues of fire
Lick ocean dry
And falling pillars
Rend the sky,
When destruction sweeps
This fated shore
And things of Time
And sense are o'er,
When hurrying doom
Blots out the day
And the heavens and Earth
Do pass away,
Serenely mayst thou
Witness all,
For thine is a house
Which may not fall,—
A mansion eternal
On immortal strands,
“A building of God
Not made with hands.”

Be faithful, then,
In duty's sphere,
The reward lies hence,
But the blessing's here;
'Tis for the toilers,
Not the drones,
That e'en this Earth-land
Hath its homes;
Not to the skulker
Who hath fled,
The world weaves chaplets
For the conqueror's head:
The race is never
To the faint,
It takes the hero
To make a saint;
While e'en below
'Tis the sailor tried
Who alone can sail
O'er the ocean wide.
Then think not to win
A crown of life
By remaining passive
In the strife,
Hope not to attain
Eternal day
By listless lagging

'Long the way,
Nor yet to reach
Immortal shores
By resting idly
On thine oars;
No, onward, upward,
Is the cry
Which leads triumphant
To the sky,
The battle's din
Will not be done
Till the last of foes
Is overcome,
And he who would
Obtain life's prize
Must wield the sword
Until he dies;
The call to lay
His armor by
Will come with victory's
Palms on high;
The road is tortuous,
Narrow, steep,
'Long mountain-sides,
O'er a yawning deep;
From every glen
A siren calls,

At every turn
 Some pilgrim falls,
And only those
 Whose footing's sure
Will ever to the rest
 Above endure.
The course lies o'er
 A treacherous main
In abject thralldom
 To the storm-king's reign,
Where sunken reef
 And hidden shoal
Like beasts of prey
 Confront the soul,
And alone by chart
 Divinely given
Can the helmsman steer
 'Twixt these to Heaven.
'Tis the steadfast, therefore,
 Who alone prevail,
The piloted ship
 That rides the gale,
The loyal heir
 Who mounts the throne,
And the lamp-lit feet
 Which journey home;
For while the service

Hath its woes,
And all the way
Is lined with foes,
Though tempests rage
And waters roar,
While rocks and breakers
Fringe the shore,
Still, truth's anchor
Holdeth fast,
Its compass leads
To land at last,
Its breastplate ever
Doth withstand,
Till Canaan greets
Its guiding hand;
And yet the runner here
Who would succeed
Must drop all that
Which could impede,
The warrior true,
With his sword drawn,
Must have naught else
But armor on;
Thou canst not journey
With the throng,
Nor expect to take
The world along.

But with every weight
And drag o'ercrest,
Firm at thy post
Before the mast,
Commit thy bark
Unto the wave,
And the God of promise
Then will save;
For no wall surrounds salvation,
It hath no stile nor stair,
But, a gift sublime of Heaven,
'Tis full and free as air;
And as of this existence
Earth's breath doth e'er receive,
So in this upper atmosphere
'Tis life but to believe.
Hence by simple trust,
With duty done,
The victory is
Forever won,
The rest secured,
The home obtained,
An eternal crown
And kingdom gained,
The title deed
To glory given,
And clearance with it

For the port of Heaven.
Awake, then, from thy lethargy,
Dispel all thy fears,
Cast out thy misgivings
And dry up thy tears;
'Tis a Father's voice
Which calls on high,
And through all thy straits
He will be nigh;
The ear which hears
The feeblest sigh
Is ever open
To the servant's cry;
The eye which notes
The sparrow's fall
Doth e'er enfold
The loved ones all;
The hand out which
The ravens feed
Will sure supply
The children's need;
The care which doth
The rose adorn
Will never leave
The heir forlorn;
While the love which gave
A Son to die

Will bring His jewels
To the sky.
And as for storms
Which intervene,—
The clouds and night
Which lie between,—
Do not the same
Attend each change
Throughout the realms
Of Nature's range?
Icy blasts
Precede the spring,
Continuous showers
The flowerets bring,
Out of mistings
Comes the morn,
Of the darkness
Day is born,
The evening's not
Till setting sun,
But with its shadows
Work is done,
And dost thou sigh
When the day of toil is run,
For that the season
Of repose hath come?
Art thou sad

When the blackness flees away
And the rising sun
Proclaims the day?
Dost thou regret
The winter past
When the spring puts forth
Its bloom at last?
Or dost thou weep
When calms smooth out the seas
And the storm is hushed
Along the leas?
If then so tranquil
When Earth's throbbings cease,
What mean these repinings
At the soul's release?
Why frown the end
Of trouble's lease,
Or start and quiver
In the lap of peace?
Or why seek phantoms
For thy fears
Here at the close
Of sorrow's years?
Why, the very forms
Which thee affright
Are ministering angels
In their flight,

The very objects
Of thy fear
Are celestial messengers
Drawing near,
While in the darkest vale
Of mortal dread
The light of life
Doth shine instead;
E'en "the Jordan's" flood,
With frigid wave,
Which here appalls thee
As it laps the Grave,
Breaks into rapturous welcomes
On the farther shore
To those who'll breast
Its surge no more.
There is no Death;
Life's sunset here
Is eternal dawn
In an immortal sphere,
And what seems so 's but a vapor
Of the Earth, evening born,
Naught but a mist
Through which cometh morn;
Only a dividing line
At the horizon thin,
Where these mortal shades end

And Heaven's glories begin ;
Merely transition
From darkness to light,
The day-star emerging
From the shadows of night ;
Simply a shifting of scene
For what the finite styles breath,
And but the scene-shifter
Whom the mortal calls Death ;
Albeit a glorious release
From the material bond
Of first conditions,
And a stride beyond,
A grand uprising
From Earth's basement gloom
To the shadeless light
Of life's upper room,
A blest promotion
From Time's carnal rule
To the eternal courses
Of an immortal school,
A passing over
This flesh divide
To the infinite areas
Of the other side,
A pressing on
From creation's bounds

To the Omniscient progression
Of the cycle's rounds,
Only bidding adieu
To these bleak wilds of pain,
To begin life anew
On a loftier plane;
Neither is there aught destructive
In the Grave's decay,
But simply a refining
Of the dross away,
A renewing and cleansing
From the filth of Earth,
A corruptible prelude
To a heavenly birth,
A sowing of mortality
In the valleys of Time
To an immortal harvest
In life's fields divine,
A planting of weakness
To a vintage of might,
A prologue of dishonor
To a kingdom of light;
Solely the putting off
Of a garb forlorn
To don the vestments
Which by saints are worn,
The leaving behind,

To rot in store,
Of the raiment unsuited
To a deathless shore;
Only a hiding from sight
Of the toiler's clothes
As the heir, reclaimed,
To his birthright goes;
Simply the returning to Earth
Of its subject gown
As the prince, in his banishment,
Receives the crown;
For this pulsating robe
Of gilded dust,
Polluted and tarnished
With sin's moth and rust,
Abandoned and cast
Aside must be
Ere its wearer's
Eyes can see
A single glory
Which belongs to me.
Still, only for Time;
A blest reunion will come,
Then, to all eternity glorified,
They reign on as one.

But hark! the Infinite speaketh,
Open thine ear
To covenants eternal
That will banish thy fear:
"Behold, I am with thee,
Oh, be not dismayed,
I, even I, am He
Whom thy ransom hath paid;
I've given both Ethiopia
And Egypt for thee,
The rich realm of Seba
And the isles of the sea;
Though the waters rage round,
They shall ne'er thee o'erflow,
But through all the billows
Dry-shod thou shalt go;
And though into the furnace
Thou mayst have call,
My presence e'en there
Will surround as a wall;
Though all Hell conspire against thee,
It shall ne'er do thee harm,
For I will uphold thee
With an Almighty arm,
And e'en to old age
I will ever maintain,
And on to hoar hairs

Will I cheer and sustain;
When thy father forsakes thee
And e'en mother-love's flown,
When all bid thee go,
Yet I'll not disown,
But to all the future,
As from all the past,
My love, Almighty, unchanging,
Enduring, shall last;
When the deep's swept by tempests
And the seas seem to o'erwhelm,
Still, be of good cheer,
My hand's at the helm,
And safe through all dangers
I'll bring thee to land,
For the waters obey me
And the winds I command;
When foes press thee hard,
And thou art ready to yield,
Then new courage take,
I am thy shield;
'At all times my grace
Is sufficient for thee,
And my strength in thy weakness
Made perfect shall be;'
When lost in the sloughs
Where dragons abide,

Look then unto me,
I'll be thy guide,
And through the mazes and shadows
Of this Death-clouded way
I'll direct and I'll bring thee
To the brightness of day;
When thou goest through 'the valley,'
I will be near,
And my rod and my staff
They shall comfort and cheer.
While here in these arms,
Folded close to my breast,
O'er the last foe triumphant
I will bear thee to rest;
And when after thy skin
Worms this body destroy,
Then a form incorruptible
I will give thee in joy,
Glorious raiment immortal
For the soul to put on,
When these poor mortal rags
Are all perished and gone;
For I am the Lord,
Thy Saviour and God,
Gathering my children
From near and abroad,
Tenderly leading

O'er life's rugged road
To the glories unutterable
Of a saintly abode,
Guiding the bark
Through the swelling and storm
Till the calms of the haven
Receiveth its form,
Noting the conflict
With an e'er-watchful eye
Till the victor is crowned
With the laurel on high,
Following closely the wanderer
In his exile alone,
And ne'er leaving his side
Till he's safe housed at home
In the mansions eternal
Which in thy Father's house be,
That thine own Elder Brother's
Now preparing for thee;
Home in the grand 'guest-chamber,'
Where the banner o'er is love,
To that unspeakable reunion
In the 'banqueting house' above;
Home to the rapturous ingathering
Of a blood-washed kindred band,
To the heavenly recognition
Of the blessed Fatherland;

Home for all eternity
For ever and for aye,
To the uncreated excellence
Of a nameless, endless day,
To the praises grand, victorious,
Hymned by Earth's saved alone
In the everlasting celebration
Of an immortal 'harvest home.'"

And yet, between all this and thee
Exists but a point of Time,
Perchance but another heart-beat
And these raptures all are thine;
Only another breath drawn,
Maybe but one more sigh,
Till all these fadeless glories
Enfold thy soul on high;
A little longer sojourn
In this alien desert land,
And a crown will clasp thy forehead
And a sceptre grace thine hand;
A few more fleeting shades,
Perhaps yet another night,
And then,—oh, blest awakening
From darkness into light!
At most another earth-day,

Its heats and burdens borne,
Closed with a peaceful sunset,
Then Heaven's eternal morn.
E'en now the glory pierceth
The rifts in this mortal cloud,
And oft on Earth's expectant ear
The music falls aloud ;
The mists about the border
Thou art already passing through,
And e'en now above thy brow appears
Droppings of the ether dew ;
Soon now the journey endeth,
Thy bark fast neareth land,
Thine earth-night now is almost spent,
For the morning is at hand ;
E'en now thy footsteps press the brink,
And there, beside the shore,
Await the loved of long ago
To bear thy spirit o'er
To the land of wondrous story,
To the realms of matchless love,
To the kingdom blest, celestial,
Where thy Father reigns above ;
And though truly yet in exile,—
A pilgrim sad, alone,—
Still, all these ills and cares surrounding
Are but heralds of the summons home.

Behold, then, these silent messengers,
Hearken to their mute appeal;
See, they cling e'en to thy garments
And into thy dwelling steal:
These feeble limbs,
These palsied hands,
Is futurity beckoning
To immortal lands;
This broken speech,
This stammering tongue,
Is Life's Morning whispering
That Earth's evening's come;
This bended form,
This shrivelled skin,
Is eternity knocking
For the tenant within;
These beclouded eyes,
These stopped-up ears,
Proclaim to the soul
That its Heaven appears;
While the nearing radiance
Falls and grows apace
On these whitening locks
And this Time-seamed face;
For didst thy sojourn last forever,
Forever, then, thine house would stand,
And 'tis thus this crumbling round thee,

All denotes a pilgrim land ;
Was this darkness e'er to smite thee,
Then would the night be longer drawn ;
What, then, mean these rising vapors
Which do e'er foretell the dawn ?
Were these seas so deep and boundless,
Smoothly wouldst thou sail them o'er ;
Then, do not life's jars admonish
That thy keel's now grating shore ?
Had this weary way no ending,
Then would thy feet be better shod ;
What, then, can Time's wear betoken
Other than the rest of God ?
Or did Earth's conflicts never cease,
Valiant then thy soul would be ;
Whence, then, all these anxious yearnings,
If not pointing to eternity ?
Ah ! thine is God's image,
After His likeness is thy frame,
And never, never this can Earth efface,
Though all its shades may once profane ;
The breath which floods thy nostrils
Is a spring from the living main,
And, like a storm-tossed vapor, here
Dissolves yet appears again
To soar in matchless splendors
The vaults of ethereal skies,

A nameless part of the eternal God,
A something which never dies.
More than this I may not tell,
Nor draw the veil aside
Upon the wonders that await
The spirit glorified;
But be patient only yet a little while,
And then thy soul will be
Raised to the lofty honors
Which are its destiny;
Then all the incomprehensible
Hedging round existence here,
In that full noontide of brightness
Will be open, plain, and clear;
Then this understanding finite
Into an all-discerning thing will change,
And this narrow mortal vision
Will put on Omniscient range;
Then eternal knowledge will replace
This contracted earthly lore,
And all the future, like the past,
Be mapped the mind before;
Then, while thy footsteps tread
The mansions of the just,
A light from God will mark the road
Which leadeth up from dust;
Then Death's dark mission will be told,

And why the body dies,
As also how the Grave's decay
Doth fit it for the skies ;
Then the purposes of affliction,
As well the cares of Time,
Will all be seen in living light
And felt in joys divine ;
Then the mysteries of creation,
The wonders of redeeming love,
The marvels of a resurrection morning,
Will all be known above ;
Then only will thy spirit comprehend,
While thine eyes, unshaded, see
The full measure of the ecstasies
Which are hidden now in me,
To which all earthly pomp and splendor,
In their most sublime display,
Cannot for a moment more be likened
Than can night compare with day.
Therefore, all these tribulations,
All the ills this life doth yield,
Are but stepping-stones to the glory
Which in thee shall be revealed,
Are but rungs upon the ladder
Whence existence climbs the height,
Scales the mount its home commanding,
Plumes its wings and takes its flight ;

Merely are life's fetters dropping,
Snappings of these carnal chains,
Falling bolts from off the dungeon
Whence the soul its Heaven attains;
Voices only from the Eternal calling
Into the shades of mortal night,
"I created, then redeemed thee,
And 'tis thus I lead to light."
Whence, then, these fears,
And why repine,
Since all of Earth
And Heaven are thine?
E'en immortal realms
Which being sods,
For thou art Christ's
And Christ is God's;
But though truly thus
My child to be,
Earth hath yet
A day for thee;
But when that is ended,
Then I'll see,
And will tell thee all
In eternity.

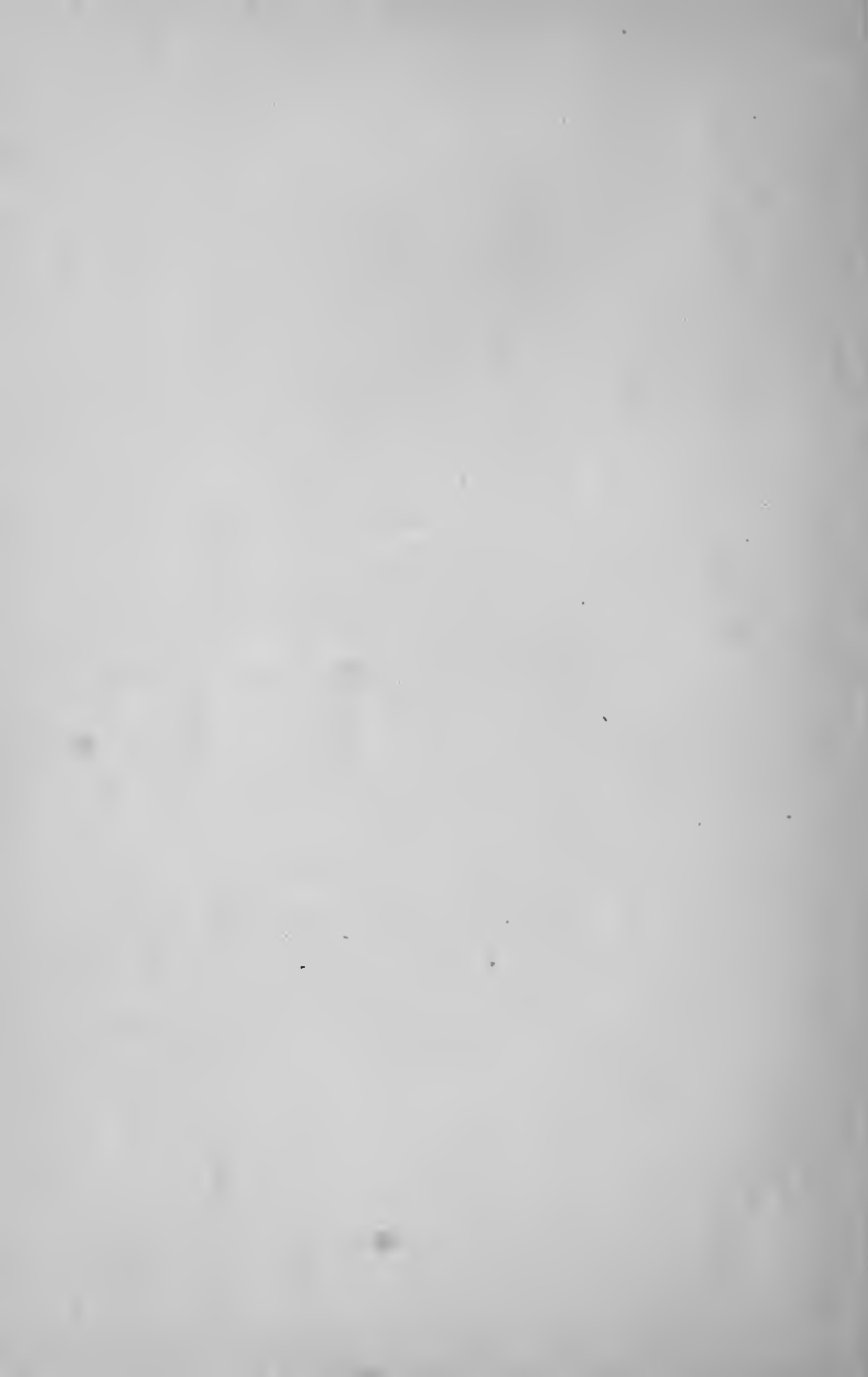
Thus another dream
Of life was broken,

Which, departing,
Left no token
Save the memory
Of that promise spoken;
But this shall ever fill
The dreamer's ears,
Revive his hopes
And quench his fears;
Then after the flight
Of these mortal years,
With the journey ended
Through this "vale of tears,"
May both he and the reader
See and feel and hear
That immortal all
In its deathless sphere.

THE END.









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